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PLAYBOY

Fast-Acting Edibles Are Perfect for a Quickie

Feeling the weight of 2026? Pump up sexy times with rapid-response edibles, for a more connected and orgasmic hookup

BY **MARY JANE GIBSON**

PHOTO BY **VOLODYMYR TVERDOKHLIB**

Everyone is struggling to find balance in this strange year. Covid fatigue has hit us hard—many of us feel cooped up, exhausted and stressed out. You know what alleviates stress? Orgasms. And what can enhance an orgasm? Cannabis.

For those of us who like to relax at the intersection of THC and sex, a recent development in the world of legal weed is changing the game: fast-acting edibles. In trying them out, along with a specialized journal to track and calibrate my sex-and-pot play, I've been happily broadening the borders of my pleasure.

According to Playboy's recent sex survey, people are having sex less often during the pandemic. A long, satisfying fuck seems like a lot of work in 2020. One solution: How about a quickie?

Speaking from recent experience, a fast bang with no foreplay can be exhilarating. Maybe one person climaxes. Maybe both. Maybe no one. Just investing a few minutes in each other's pleasure will spark an endorphin rush that will have you feeling better.

Adding weed to the equation can make things even hotter. Unsurprisingly, the Playboy sex survey found that the vast majority of respondents—75 percent—reported pairing sex with cannabis during lockdown. THC is a vasodilator, meaning it increases blood flow, so in addition to the euphoria or high you may feel from consuming cannabis, it can also enhance sexual pleasure. The new intimacy journal from Goldleaf outlines several ways to incorporate weed into your sex life and includes a log book. The idea is to document play and calibrate "couture stoned sex" experiences, as Sophie Saint Thomas, who co-developed the journal, explains in its foreword.

"When it comes to cannabis, there's not a one-size-fits-all model," Saint Thomas tells Playboy. "For me, it might be a 30 milligram edible taken an hour before sex. For someone else, it might be a joint they share with their partner after sex." As I was replaying my hot afternoon hookup in my head, I wondered what might best work for my own cannabis-enhanced quickie.

During the pandemic, I've been smoking way less weed than usual, instead using tinctures and edibles. But the long onset time of edibles usually rules them out as aids for spontaneous sex. Ingesting THC as an edible, rather than smoking or vaping it, creates a longer pathway to the brain, traveling through the digestive system and liver. It can take anywhere from 45 minutes to two hours to feel the effects of an edible, depending on your metabolism and tolerance.

Enter fast-acting edibles.

CannaCraft, a cannabis company based in Santa Rosa, California has a line of low-dose artisanal edibles under the label Satori. This year, Satori released fast-acting milk-chocolate-covered strawberries, each containing 3 milligrams of THC. An edible experience without the wait—how does that work? The nanotechnology the edibles use is commonly incorporated in vitamins and supplements, and reportedly improves the bioavailability of absorbed ingredients such as cannabis oil.

"Basically, it breaks down the cannabinoids into smaller molecules," CannaCraft brand manager Elise McDonough says. "When the edible hits your digestive system, it 'tricks' your body into absorbing it faster." Those who indulge may feel the effects as soon as 10 minutes after eating a Satori strawberry.

If you're nervous about getting overwhelmingly high, the significantly reduced onset time with low-dose edibles should allay some fears.

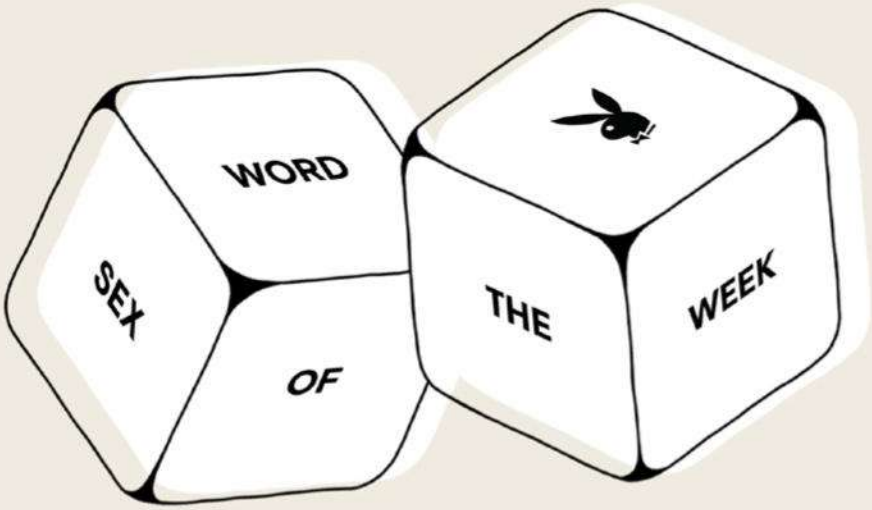
CannaCraft's director of new product development Matt Elmes, who has a Ph.D. in molecular and cellular biology, says the effects of fast-acting edibles also wear off more rapidly than a classic weed brownie. "It's a typical pharmacology principle," he says. "The faster a drug starts to affect you, the faster it's going to go away. Usually within a couple hours, you'll feel a full return to normalcy."

Negative experiences with standard weed edibles are all too common. (Remember when Maureen Dowd thought she was dying after she ate too much infused chocolate?) If you're nervous about getting overwhelmingly high, the significantly reduced onset time with low-dose edibles should allay some fears. You'll feel the full effects quickly and can adjust your experience accordingly.

When I sampled the Satori strawberries, I felt the familiar, pleasant warmth of THC spreading through my system in minutes. For me it worked best on an empty stomach, taken with a little water. I generally prefer lower doses, so the 3 milligrams of THC per chocolate was ideal. When I wanted to feel more, I just popped another in my mouth.

This brings us back to the quickie. Weed has been linked to an increase in more satisfying, easier-to-reach orgasms. Even better, cannabis can make you feel more connected to your body, your impulses and your partner. The blissful melting feeling I get from weed, along with the rush of heat from wanting my lover to fuck me immediately is like Pop Rocks for the soul.

Last week, just as I was about to log on for a midday Zoom meeting, I got a "Can we reschedule?" email, right as I heard my lover finish a work call. The gold Satori tin glinted in the sun. I grabbed my favorite cannabis-infused lube, ate two strawberry bites and walked into his office (a.k.a. the kitchen) to offer him a piece. We were naked so fast it was funny—and by the time we were fucking a few minutes later, we were high too.



Prone bone

WRITTEN BY
ANITA LITTLE

ILLUSTRATIONS BY
KATIE BAILIE

If your libidinous mind can imagine it, there's probably already a term for it

prone bone (*n, v*) a sex position in which a woman lies completely flat on her stomach while a man penetrates her vagina from behind

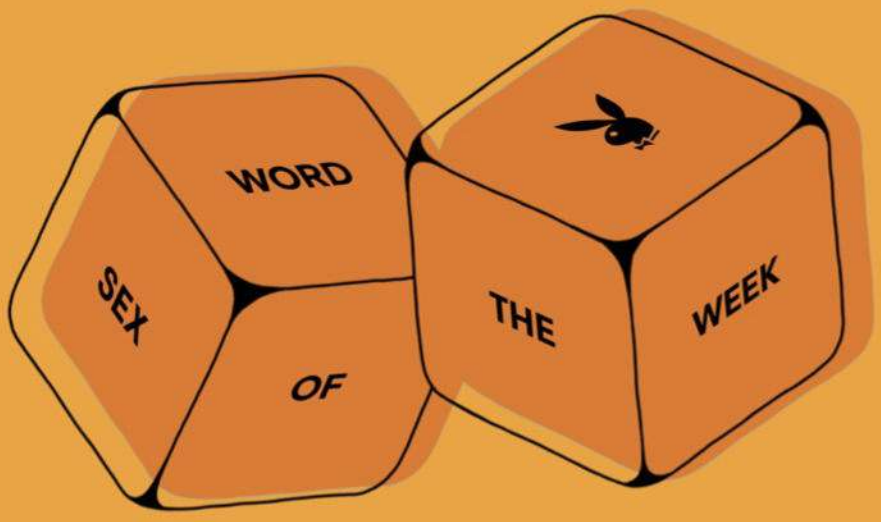
Carrie flipped onto her stomach as Jackson eagerly straddled her—prone bone always made them both climax within minutes.

Doggystyle is a tried-and-true classic. Although it will always be a fan favorite, romantics say one drawback is the lack of intimacy and physical closeness. There's not as much body-to-body contact as with positions such as missionary, you don't get to face each other and there's little opportunity for eye contact—unless the receiver is extremely flexible.

We would like to introduce another rear-entry position that combines the best of doggy and missionary: the prone bone. This position, also known as the flatiron, consists of the woman or vagina-owner lying on her stomach with her legs straight and her hips slightly raised. The man or penis-owner then rests on top of her, penetrating her vagina from behind. There's increased sensation for the person on top since the position naturally squeezes the vagina together, making for a tighter feel, and there's more control for the person on the bottom since they can direct the depth of penetration by lifting or straightening their legs.

This position is a nice switch-up if you enjoy the primal nature of being taken from behind but desire the warmth and coziness of your partner's full weight on top of you. And for well-endowed men who are worried about causing discomfort for their partner, this position is perfect if you want to avoid hitting a woman's cervix. (PSA: Getting your cervix pounded is not a pleasurable experience for most women.) In other words, it hits all the right spots while missing the wrong ones.

And a final plus? Prone bone is a very easy transition into anal or just post-coital spooning depending on how young the night is.



Clowning

WRITTEN BY
ANITA LITTLE

ILLUSTRATIONS BY
KATIE BAILIE

If your libidinous mind can imagine it, there's probably already a term for it

clowning (*v., n.*) the act of engaging in erotic clown play

Laura and Derrick only recently joined the clowning community, but they had already stocked up on rubber chickens and whimsical dildos.

We talked last week about how fear can make you horny. So if you're looking to be somewhat terrified and also get off, look no further than the world of clowning. Clowning, also known as clown play or coulrophilia, describes sexual arousal in the presence of clowns. It's why the search term "Pennywise" returns a curious amount of results on Pornhub and why "clown escort" is a profession.

Clowns can be extremely creepy, as anyone who has read Stephen King can attest, but coulrophiles flip that fear into pleasure by dressing up as clowns for their bedroom romps. There are Reddit communities and online forums dedicated to the fetish, where coulrophiles trade videos of fetish performances and share their wildest fantasies. Something about the look of white makeup; an impossibly wide, painted-on smile; and a neon pink clown wig is equal parts menacing and sexy for some people, resulting in what is often called a "feargasm."

There's often a light BDSM element to clown play, in which the clown takes on the dominant role and the partner takes on the role of the submissive. The sub, helpless and frozen in terror, is taunted with spankings and insults and, if they're really kinky, maybe even squirted in the face with a fake flower.

As you're dressing up this weekend for what will hopefully be a safe at-home Halloween, maybe trade the French maid look for some big red shoes and a whoopee cushion.

Dr Lena Li

SINGAPORE'S 1ST EURASIAN PLAYMATE

Happy to have you on Playboy. What does a perfect day in your life look like from start to finish? I am glad to be here! A perfect day for me starts with waking up early, feeling sexy and confident, then slipping into something daring, maybe a silky slip or just my skin. I love starting the morning with a slow, passionate blow job before breakfast, and maybe some fresh fruit and bubbly, just to set the mood. Throughout the day, I like to indulge in a little adventure. Maybe a sun-drenched poolside lounging, a bit of flirtatious teasing, or a spontaneous photo shoot where I can show off my curves. In the evening, I love to unwind with someone special, sharing intimate moments, whispering naughty secrets, and exploring each other's desires. Of course, a perfect day ends with me slipping into something sexy and slipping into bed, feeling completely satisfied and ready to dream of all the pleasures tomorrow might bring.

What is one New Year's resolution you're truly committed to this year? Well, darling, this year I am all about embracing my sensual side and exploring new pleasures. My resolution? To indulge in every scintillating moment, push boundaries, and make 2026 the most unforgettable year yet, both inside and out. Who's ready to join me on this tantalizing journey?.

Your ideal first date: My ideal first date would be something truly unforgettable, think candlelit dinner at a cozy, intimate spot where we can really connect, gaze into each other's eyes, and let the chemistry ignite. After that, maybe a walk under the stars, whispering sweet nothings, and teasing each other with playful touches. It's all about the anticipation, the flirtation, and letting the night take us wherever it wants to go, because when passions are in the air, the possibilities are endless.

3 things in your handbag: Well, you know I like to be prepared for any situation. Lipstick to keep my pout irresistible, extra G-string just in case I drop mine in a pub. And, a big size condom, because safety is just as alluring as pleasure. It is all about keeping things sizzling, spontaneous, and a little bit daring. After all, life's more fun when you are ready to turn up the heat anytime, anywhere.

Guilty pleasure: If I am being honest, my guilty pleasure has to be teasing, whether it is a little flirty wink or a sultry glance that leaves someone wanting more. I love to play a little hard to get, teasing just enough to keep things exciting. It is all about the anticipation, the thrill of the chase, and knowing that I hold the power to turn up the heat whenever I choose. After all, a little naughtiness keeps life spicy, don't you agree?.

What's one goal you didn't hit last year that you're determined to achieve this time? Last year I was a little too shy to fully let my naughty side out, but this year? Oh, I plan to turn up the heat and really own my desires. One goal I didn't quite hit was exploring even more of my wild side and indulging in my fantasies without holding back. I am determined to make this year all about embracing my sensuality, trying new things, and living unapologetically sexy. After all, life's too short not to indulge in a little mischief and pleasure.

What big adventure or challenge are you planning to take on this year? I like to keep things exciting, so this year I am planning to push my boundaries and explore new heights, both literally and figuratively. Whether it is trying a daring new sport or discovering hidden passions, I believe life is all about embracing the thrill. Who knows? Maybe I will even take a spontaneous trip somewhere hot and steamy. Stay tuned, because I am just getting started, and I love a little adventure that leaves us gasping for more.

What's something fun or unexpected about you that your fans might not know? What most people don't realize is that I am a thrillseeker at heart. I adore slipping away to skinnydip in nothing but heels when no one is watching. It keeps life deliciously unpredictable, because the sexiest fantasies are always the ones you never see coming.

What has been your proudest moment in your journey so far? I am honored to have become the first Singaporean to receive the 'Emerging Star Award' at the Influencer Magazine Awards 2025. And of course, also being the first Singaporean Playboy Playmate in this edition. A recognition that reflects both my dedication and the growing impact of Singaporean voices on the global stage.

What music, movies, or books inspire your energy and creativity? I am all about those sultry jazz tunes that make my heartbeat race, and of course, a little bit of forbidden fiction that sparks my wild imagination. When I dive into a smoky lounge or flip through a provocative novel, it awakens my sensual side and fuels my creativity. Whether it is a seductive movie scene or a passionate melody, I let it ignite my desire to explore, express, and seduce in everything I do.

What new doors or opportunities are you hoping to explore in your career? Well, I am always craving new ways to tease and tantalize my audience. I want to push boundaries, explore more daring roles, and really let my sensuality shine through. Whether it is venturing into more provocative projects or partnering with brands that celebrate confidence and allure, I am ready to open those sexy new doors. The thrill of discovery keeps me motivated. There is so much more excitement to explore, both on and off the set.

What message do you hope people take from your work on this feature? I want people to feel the tease, the thrill, the unapologetic pleasure of owning their desires. My work here

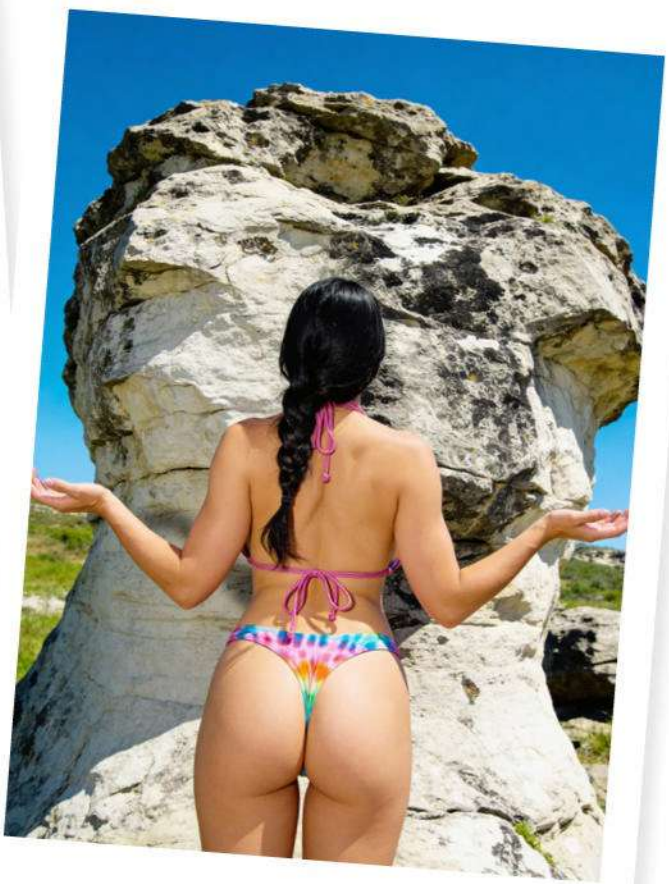
isn't about playing it safe, but it is about inviting you to indulge, to surrender to the fantasy, and to remember that confidence is the sexiest outfit I will ever wear. If you walk away from this feature craving more, then I have done my job, because temptation should always leave you hungry.

How do you stay authentic in an industry that's constantly changing? Staying true to myself is my secret weapon. In this ever-evolving world of AI and digital fantasies, I remind myself that authenticity is the ultimate seduction. I stay grounded in my confidence, embrace my unique quirks, and let my true personality shine through, whether it is in front of the camera or behind the scenes. After all, nothing's more alluring than a woman who knows who she is and isn't afraid to own it, no matter how the industry shifts. So, I keep things spicy, stay playful, and always stay true to my own vibe because authenticity is the hottest trait of all.

When people look back at your career, what do you hope they say about you? I want them to remember me as someone who embraced sensuality and confidence, never afraid to be bold and authentic. I hope they say I radiated charm, allure, and a playful spirit that left a lasting impression. Ultimately, I want to be seen as a woman who owned her sexuality with grace and has fun along the way.

What kind of impact do you hope to leave on the industry and the next generation of models? I want to leave an impression that is as unforgettable as a sultry glance and as bold as a midnight rendezvous. I hope to inspire the next generation to embrace their confidence, own their sensuality, and never be afraid to show the world their inner fire. If I can encourage women to feel empowered, sexy, and unapologetically themselves, then I know I have made my mark. After all, the industry is about celebrating beauty in all its wild, daring forms, so I plan to leave a legacy that's as seductive and inspiring as a perfect tease.

What legacy do you want to leave not just as a model, but as a person? I want to leave a legacy that's all about confidence, passion, and embracing your true self. I believe beauty isn't just about looks; it is about owning your sensuality and inspiring others to do the same. As a Playboy Playmate, I hope to show women that feeling sexy and empowered is the most alluring thing of all. So, my legacy? A bold, unapologetic spirit that encourages everyone to celebrate their unique allure and live life with a little naughty sparkle.



What Should Porn for Women Look Like?

This female-founded production company is trying to find out

BY **DANA HAMILTON**

PHOTOS BY **DAINIS GRAVERIS ON UNSPLASH**

I grew up on the porn of the early 2000s. Late at night, my eight-inch TV (with built-in VCR!) picked up bleach-blonde hair, surgically enhanced boobs and landing strips so thin they could be mistaken for John Waters's mustache. I squinted to make out vaginas getting plundered by salami-sized dicks in "straight" porn and jammed by fingers decorated with uncomfortable-looking press-on nails in "lesbian" porn. If a clit was ever touched—which was rarely—it was with the same energy as a flamenco guitarist after a three-day coke binge or someone trying to erase a wrong answer on a Scantron with 30 seconds left on an important exam.

As I learned more about my body—particularly my clit—and started replicating things I learned in porn, I realized none of the stuff I was seeing could result in an actual orgasm for a person with my anatomy. At first, I thought I was broken—that there was something wrong with my body—but then I started talking to women and hearing similar frustrations: The methods to please us that our partners learned from porn simply didn't work. Many of us shared the pain of a partner believing they can stick it in an ass in one fluid motion with spit as lube, the confusion of not being able to orgasm from penetration alone, the exhaustion of girl-on-top becoming a Barry's Bootcamp–style squat workout with no climax and the guilt of thinking our bodies are at fault.

It would be fine if we could all recognize that we've been lied to and have a cultural understanding that porn isn't real, that it's a fantasy not to be tried at home. But we don't.

Instead, we have a world in which people believe mainstream porn is a real, usable instruction manual for how to please someone with a vulva and assume the orgasms depicted on screen are real.

As an adult, I couldn't look at porn the same way again, and I stopped watching it altogether. Every time I'd try to get off, the knowledge that the women were faking it made me feel bad. And don't get me started on the misinformation. When I became a sex writer and educator, all the myths I had been taught as fact via scrambled TV were things I was now correcting via DMs and weekly Q&A sessions on my Instagram.

The chasm between what real sex looks like and what sex looks like in porn continues to widen. I tell people that sex in porn is to real sex as the WWE is to wrestling in the Olympics. The mechanics are there, but one is purely entertainment and blown way out of proportion. For me, the choice is whether to exclude yourself from watching porn entirely or watch something that leaves a knot in your stomach.

Luckily, it seems the sex industry is waking up to the way people get turned on. Sex-positive bloggers and publications such as Salty exist on Instagram (when they're not combatting shadow bans). Sex toy companies like Unbound, Satisfyer, Womanizer and Fun Factory have followings akin to influencers. Activists, writers and sex-positive brands are calling bullshit on tropes that have been perpetuated since Debbie did Dallas. Porn from PinkLabel.tv, the CrashPad Series and Erika Lust is seeking to offset the misinformation and lack of pleasure in porn, and the cultural ramifications of both.

When I was invited to observe a shoot for Bellesa Films, I immediately said yes. Scrolling through Bellesa's Instagram posts and looking at their collaborations with Laurie Mintz, author of Becoming Cliterate and wearer of a clitoris necklace, I could see Bellesa putting in the work. The production company prides itself on having women call the shots every step of the way (Bellesa was founded by a woman and features scenes both written and directed by women), and I was interested to see firsthand what porn looks like when it's created by people with my parts.

I knew things would be different the moment I arrived on set at 8:30 on a Tuesday morning in the San Fernando Valley and my five-foot-six, brunette, Macy's catalogue, not-Victoria's-Secret-lookin' ass was mistaken as "talent" by the makeup artist (which my 15-year-old self would consider one of the biggest thrills in my life to date).

The male performer, Damon Dice, was stuck in rush hour traffic, so while we waited, I chatted with Bellesa founder and CEO Michelle Shnaidman, director Jacky St. James, PA Shawn Alff and the crew, as the female performer, Cassidy Klein, stretched and used a foam roller on the floor. We spoke about Cassidy's plans for her birthday—hiking and camping by herself—which turned into a group conversation about mortality and growing older. The vibe was so comfortable that only when I accidentally spilled coffee on the floor and it was immediately cleaned up with a baby wipe was I reminded exactly where I was.

When Damon arrived, production immediately got down to business. Bellesa takes creating a story so seriously that about half the filming time was spent nailing the exposition. Each Bellesa movie has an actual backstory before the sex happens. This wasn't the pizza delivery guy of yesteryear or even the stepbrother fucking his stepsister and stepmom of today. In this scene, Cassidy was going to her sister's ex-fiance's

This wasn't the pizza delivery guy of yesteryear or even the stepbrother fucking his stepsister and stepmom of today.

For the first time, we're seeing women as participants in sex instead of bystanders, and Bellesa nails this beautifully.

house to pick up the rest of her sister's stuff and return her engagement ring. This premise—like most Bellesa Films features—began as a fantasy suggestion from one of Bellesa's community members.

Just like a commercial movie set, Jacky stopped Damon and Cassidy often to talk about inflection, tone and character development. The connection they were creating on film carried over between takes as they playfully touched and hugged each other. (I later learned that Bellesa makes sure real-life chemistry exists by asking the female performer what type of sex she wants to have and with which male performer she wants to have it before the script is written.)

Next, Cassidy showed Jacky the clothes she brought as wardrobe options. I was expecting discussions about lingerie, but they went with an army green spaghetti-strap tank top, jeans, brown strappy sandals and a flesh-colored bra. A flesh-colored bra! You know, what normal people wear when they're not expecting to have sex. The scene hadn't even started, and I was already sold.

After the exposition had been filmed to her liking and a few clothed promo shots were photographed, Jacky prepared the set for the next part by announcing, "Hey, anybody wanna fuck?" We laughed.

After the performers showed each other their latest STI test results, Jacky asked them to semi-privately talk to each other about dos and don'ts. I caught Cassidy mentioning to Damon that she really enjoys having her neck licked and kissed. Everything else was between the two of them, out of earshot. When the scene started and the camera was rolling, one of the first things Damon did was lick the entire length of her neck in one stroke. The look on Cassidy's face made my heart flutter.

I realize the fantasy is having a partner who gives a shit about getting you off. Vulva-havers are looking for sex that looks the way it looks when there's a great partner involved who doesn't see our bodies as merely something to masturbate with. To see Cassidy not being treated as a conquest, I immediately thought of all the women now learning about their bodies and thinking, My pleasure counts too. I should have a say in how good this feels for me too. For the first time, we're seeing women as participants in sex instead of bystanders, and Bellesa nails this beautifully.

There's laughter as they fumble to take their clothes off and a continuation of the storyline throughout the sex, with Damon ad-libbing, "I'm so glad you stayed," after making out some more. He asks for consent before fingering her and again before going down on her, and he even eats pussy the right way, where the mechanics of it are so small they aren't visible. Pussy-eating in most porn looks like a 13-year-old's first kiss on a dance floor. When Damon spits on her, he does so stealthily instead of passionately hocking a loogie onto her cooch like it had just disrespected his father (one of my biggest porn pet peeves). He doesn't eat her out to orgasm, but at least it looks similar to what would eventually cause an orgasm. They even mutually masturbate a few times and I see Cassidy smiling as she self-stimulates.

When she rides him, she tilts her pelvis forward a little more than is typical in porn, and I can believe her clitoris was grinding on his pelvis. Her legs shake in a way that doesn't seem manufactured. Her moans crescendo, and she orgasms—but not the screaming, eye-rolling, tongue-out kind of porn "orgasm" that's about as subtle as a punch in the face.

"Did you really come?" Jacky asks Cassidy. "I don't believe you."

"I swear, I really did!" Cassidy says. And I believe her.

They take a quick break between sex positions. As the crew changes camera positions, Cassidy and Damon compare and explain their tattoos like old friends. "Don't feel the need to orgasm unless it's actually real," Jacky reminds Cassidy before cueing the camera again. "It's not supposed to be perfect; it's supposed to be real." I wondered how many times that phrase was uttered on the set of the porn I watched at 2 A.M. when I was 15 years old.

And, just as she says, it isn't perfect. There are some things Jacky says she has to get the talent to unlearn. I notice Damon grab Cassidy's wrist to place her hand on his dick and then push her head while she gives him oral—which lasts longer than the time spent on Cassidy—but I notice him catch himself and stop. When Damon lets "I want you to taste your pussy on my dick" slip while Cassidy is blowing him post-vaginal sex, Jacky is quick to sternly tell him she's going to cut that part out.

"You're gonna get notes; I'm gonna be hard on you," she tells him half-teasingly before leaning over to me to say, "It's kind of liberating because they have to unlearn everything."

I'm ready to unlearn everything from porn too.

I'm excited for people to become more personal with their porn. After all, you used to only hope to get a glimpse of a titty after asking to head to the back room of a Blockbuster. Now, your seatmate on Spirit Airlines is playing it on their phone, listening to moans through a pair of AirPods. To get to know a brand and develop a connection to their porn, as well as a concern that it's socially responsible? That's what should happen as porn studios become household brands. Beyond those Girls Gone Wild DVDs you ordered at 3 A.M. or the monthly subscription you had to Bang Bus in college, would you have been able to name any production companies five or 10 years ago? I couldn't.

But times are a-changin'.

Bellesa Films recently asked its community about using sex toys during partnered sex—something I've desperately wanted to be normalized in porn, and they're making it happen. Bellesa Films is building a brand by incorporating multiple facets of women's sexuality, which has been treated as a second thought for so long. We know a person with a penis comes in porn because there's physical evidence. Navigating the world and not knowing if your orgasm is guaranteed by nature makes you view porn a different way. Sex sells, and vulva-havers are buying too.

"Don't feel the need to orgasm unless it's actually real. It's not supposed to be perfect; it's supposed to be real."

Willie Nelson's Vision for the Future of Hemp and Wellness

Expand your self-care routine the Willie way: good sleep, enough water and daily hemp

WRITTEN BY **CHLOE OLEWITZ**

PHOTOS BY **NORMAN POSSELT / FSTOP, JOHN FORSON ON UNSPLASH**

Country music legend Willie Nelson is known for having two things within reach at all times on his tour bus: something to smoke and a hot cup of coffee. So it came as no surprise when Nelson decided to launch his own weed-focused brand in 2016. Willie's Reserve became the embodiment of Nelson's beliefs about citizens' rights and responsibilities when it comes to weed in the United States, offering various THC-laden products, from prerolled joints to vape oils.

As Nelson expanded his interests from weed to hemp (a member of the cannabis family grown with less than 0.3 percent THC, the compound that gets you high), it was only natural that a new business venture followed. Through his newest company, Willie's Remedy, Nelson's passion for cannabis bears fruit in the form of an "everyday hemp" brand that uses the full range of nonintoxicating cannabinoids derived from hemp in a diverse array of products, most notably a first-of-its-kind whole-bean coffee infused with CBD that marries Nelson's love for cannabis and coffee.

Prepared according to the brewing instructions, a typical cup of Willie's Remedy coffee serves 15 mg of CBD, comfortably within the dosing range many canna-brands recommend for typical recreational use. The goal is to join the calming, anxiety-reducing properties of CBD with the natural energy boost of caffeine. The result is a more balanced, longer-lasting lift, as opposed to the crash-and-burn effect of caffeine that can bring on jitters and anxiety.

That balance is what keeps Elizabeth Hogan, vice president of brands at Willie's Remedy's parent company, GCH Inc., drinking the coffee throughout the day. "You get all the uplifting energy and extroversion that people look for from coffee, but the edginess or anxiety that sometimes comes up with too much caffeine is totally taken down," she says.

Before Willie's Remedy officially launched at Nelson's annual Fourth of July Picnic in 2018, many of the performers that hung out backstage or visited Honeysuckle Rose, Nelson's famous tour bus, became informal taste testers. "A lot of guys come back to say, 'Wow, that's the pre-show drink I need!'" recalls Hogan. The idea of CBD-infused coffee as an alternative to the liquid courage of tequila shots, for example, points to the everyday hemp lifestyle the brand espouses.

When Nelson announced he'd stopped smoking in 2019, word spread that he had quit pot. It made a juicy headline, but the idea was ridiculous. Nelson told San Antonio's KSAT at the time: "I have abused my lungs quite a bit in the past, so breathing is a little more difficult these days and I have to be careful." Lung health is a serious concern for any singer, and certainly for an 87-year-old one who has talked openly about putting his body through the ringer. But quitting smoking doesn't have to mean quitting cannabis.

"Eating, drinking, adding it to your daily routine—it's another way to get the endocannabinoid system firing," Hogan says. Having nonsmoking options—whether a dose of CBD in your morning brew or munching on THC edibles—facilitates that range of choices. Nelson never quit pot, and smoking has never been the only way to consume weed or hemp. Today, in a world ravaged by a virus that attacks the lungs, alternative methods for cannabis consumption are more appealing than ever.

Nelson's goal is to introduce various avenues of consumption that will help people implement hemp as part of a daily wellness routine. Scientists increasingly accept the endocannabinoid system's role in regulating homeostasis in a number of major organs and biochemical processes, from the brain to the endocrine system to the immune response to energy levels. Why wouldn't you want to support the system that balances out the body? The brand imagines everyday hemp as another item on the list of things we already do to take care of ourselves, such as drinking water, sleeping well and getting exercise.

Although this isn't the only CBD coffee product on the market, it was the first fully infused whole-bean coffee (compared to preground coffee coated in oil). During the traditional coffee roasting process, each bean's natural oils travel to its surface. Then as the beans cool, they reabsorb those freshly released oils. Hemp oil is introduced directly into the roasting drum while the raw beans are being heated, so it can then be absorbed back into the roasted coffee beans along with all their natural oils.

"Today, in a world ravaged by a virus that attacks the lungs, alternative methods for cannabis consumption are more appealing than ever."

A now-discontinued decaffeinated option never took off, but consumer demand inspired the team's turn to tea. They have launched six caffeinated and caffeine-free varieties brewed from leaves infused with full-spectrum hemp oil, in a similar process to the coffee bean infusion. Beyond brews, they also offer tinctures in four strengths and a topical CBD balm.

As the brand's official chief tasting officer, Nelson is deeply involved in the process of bringing every product to market. "But do you know who decides what makes it to Willie Nelson?" Hogan asks. The answer is Annie Nelson, Willie's wife. It was Annie who brought the idea of hemp-infused coffee to the table in the first place, and she still curates the hemp applications the team tries, tastes and experiments with.

Yes, Annie is married to Willie, and yes, cannabis is a part of her daily life. But while Willie takes a no-holds-barred approach to weed, Annie actually isn't a big fan of getting high. It's not that she has anything against smoking weed, she just prefers to commune with cannabis in other ways. Before Willie's eponymous brands existed, Annie had spent years experimenting at home, cooking up all kinds of cannabis concoctions from both weed and hemp.

In addition to being highly involved in product development, the Nelsons also take an active role in destigmatizing the use of the plant. Willie has been vocal about his support of cannabis from the start and has paid the price at times—he has been arrested for possession and pulled over various times for searches of his tour bus. After decades spent touting the benefits of weed and championing legalization, breaking into the business with his own brands was personally meaningful for Nelson. His advocacy is part and parcel of his legacy, and his justice-minded priorities are baked into both the Reserve and Remedy brands.

Nelson and his team refuse to lose sight of the sheer number of people who are imprisoned for selling a commodity that cannabis companies now trade in legally. That fact drives their push for legalization, which could reverse decades of unjust incarceration while also opening the door to funded research into cannabis as medicine. Meanwhile, because cannabis and coffee are both plants grown in the ground, they are both impacted by the global realities that farmers face, from issues of racial justice to the threat of climate chaos.

That's how sourcing became one of the ways the company turns ethics into action. Their beans come from coffee farm cooperatives in Colombia and Nicaragua that are dedicated to serving their local communities, creating opportunities for farmers and supporting women entrepreneurs. On the CBD side, they use carbon-dioxide-extracted full-spectrum hemp oil sourced from independent Colorado farms that employ organic farming methods.

It's a mouthful, but hyper-precise labeling also feeds into the brand's mission. They believe in building a safe environment for consumers, and in the wild west of CBD, that starts with education. They want transparent and honest labeling to become standard practice so consumers can know how much of each active ingredient they're getting and see exactly how each product was made. It comes at a cost, but they see empowering consumers as a necessary step toward reframing hemp as an element of wellness instead of as a ploy for corporate wealth.

It's easy to be skeptical of yet another CBD brand with a celebrity name on the tin, but decades of advocacy and enjoyment have made Nelson a reputable and respected leader in the industry. Nelson has also spent his life modeling a kind of consumption that centers on a celebration of each new day.

"The idea behind Willie's Remedy is to demonstrate to the world how hemp can be a daily part of a legendary life well lived," Hogan says. "When you sit in a room with Willie and talk with him about cannabis and all of its potential, he just glows. Willie is an expert in how to enjoy this plant."

WILLIE'S
REMEDY
CHAMOMILE
PYRAMID BAG
200 MG
WILLIE'S
REMEDY
CLASSIC GREEN
PYRAMID BAG
200 MG

WE KNOW WHY HORROR FILMS MAKE *YOU* HORNY

Feeling scared and sexually aroused aren't mutually exclusive—they actually go hand-in-hand during Halloween time

BY **TORI LYNN ADAMS**
ILLUSTRATION BY **OLLY JEAVONS**

His eyes were locked on me. I didn't dare move a muscle.

Once he turned his attention away, I moved with urgency toward the nearest receptacle I could find. I swiftly trapped the spider underneath it. Things were under my control, and yet I still felt terrified of the unknown—what was the spider doing in there? Plotting his revenge? All day I felt a nervous itch to lift the canister and face my fear. I avoided it for hours until I finally lifted it and smooshed the eight-legged beast.

As petrified as I was to find a sizable black widow spider in my apartment, there was something thrilling about the whole escapade—especially considering how mundane life has been during the pandemic. There is a unique pleasure we derive from the sensation of being afraid. It's part of the reason horror films are so visceral and emotionally effective.

I became all too aware of this when I began taking courses on horror films my senior year of college. My homework usually consisted of some insightful readings and a handful of horror films. I quickly found that as spine-chilling as the films were, they were also quite cathartic. The anticipation I experienced while watching the films was almost more unbearable than anything that could actually happen on screen. I also found that some of the most terrifying scenes were actually the most pleasurable to watch. When Marion gets stabbed to death in the 1960 classic Psycho, the camera eroticized the shots of her bare skin as she moans orgasmically and collapses to the ground. We are called upon to be frightened and sexually stimulated at the same time.

According to film scholar Linda Williams, horror is one of the three types of film considered a "body genre," along with melodrama and porn. Each genre demands a physical response, whether it's screaming, crying or orgasming—or, in the case of some horror films, all three. Consequently, films that straddle all three genres are some of the most emotionally and physically impactful movies you will ever watch. But as powerful as these films are, they have their limitations.

Aside from porn films that were distributed to underground theaters and largely unregulated in their early days, any and all films that were going to be shown in popular theater chains had to abide by a strict set of rules regulating how sex was depicted on screen. For horror films to reach a wide audience and still explore sexuality, directors and screenwriters often bent the rules by subtly weaving in depictions of sex or painting sexuality in a negative light to please industry leaders and avoid censorship. "During the days of the Hays Production Code, from 1930 to 1968, representations of sexuality were censored but a lot of violence wasn't," says Morgan F. Woolsey, my former professor and a current lecturer at the University of California, Los Angeles. "In response, film directors came up with ways to connote sexuality without depicting it directly. For example, you could have a vampire seducing a woman to drink her blood." As a result, horror films often encourage viewers to both fear and crave the action on screen.

When you feel horny and horrified at the same time, it's natural for the body to go into overdrive to process the competing emotions. Our emotions are primal, so although our bodies subconsciously know how to react to any given scenario, our brains may take some time to catch up. Horror films blur the line between fear and desire and cause us to respond in a more extreme manner.

To further complicate things, film directors often manipulate the gaze of their camera so the audience can relate to both the victims and the killers at different points in the film. The experience ranges from masochistic to sadistic depending on the gaze of the camera and the relationship viewers have to the people on screen. "The horror film allows audiences to be on both sides of this power and to move flexibly from one position to the other," Woolsey says. "There's something very BDSM-esque about that."

"There's an endless variety of eroticism in horror, just like there's an endless variety in what people find erotic."

Perhaps one of the more obvious ways power is employed on screen is in vampire films. From Dracula to Edward Cullen, vampires have often been portrayed as powerful entities whose sensual nature attracts women to their demise. The same is true for the vampires in the 1983 flick The Hunger, starring David Bowie, Susan Sarandon and Catherine Deneuve. It is seemingly impossible for mortal characters to resist the charms of the vampires they meet, but giving in to their desires always leads to a power struggle where violence, sometimes shown quite subtly, is inevitable.

Almost all horror films tap into our twisted sense of desire even if it isn't in the most obvious way. "Some of the classic slashers, like Halloween, The Texas Chainsaw Massacre and Friday the 13th, may appear to be devoid of sexuality, but this is just because actual sex is completely sublimated through violence," Woolsey points out.

Take Jaws for example. Steven Spielberg's summer blockbuster had people flocking from the beaches to the theaters, time and again. People were scared to go swimming during the summer of 1975, but they made repeat visits to theaters. The experience was simply too enthralling to resist. When John Williams's three-note theme begins and the shark approaches the boat, you can't help but brace yourself for the inevitable attack. Each time the shark swims away and lets them off the hook, you relax—but only briefly. You get tenser and tenser until finally the shark attacks and your expectations are met. Sound familiar? It's probably not too unlike your sexual climaxes.

You would be hard-pressed to find a horror film that doesn't tap into this uncanny relationship between our fears and fantasies. "There's an endless variety of eroticism in horror, just like there's an endless variety in what people find erotic," Woolsey argues. By tapping into that curious dichotomy, horror films demand our attention and force us to respond physically and emotionally.

In the real world, we are forced to abide by laws and social customs, but when we are plugged into a good horror film we can explore any and all taboos in a socially acceptable and safe 90-minute window, and come out the other side horrified, relieved and, if we're lucky, sexually satisfied.

Top Four Tips for Responsible Cuffing

BY **KELSEY EISEN**

PHOTO BY **TERO VESALAINEN**

Navigating cuddle season? If you want your relationship to survive and thrive, read this advice from a divorce attorney

As a divorce attorney, I have essentially made a career out of shorting romantic love. When the pandemic hit, I told every colleague who would listen how much business we were about to get. Unfortunately for love, I was right. If absence makes the heart grow fonder, constant togetherness does the opposite. Much like Marie Kondo, the messes of others pay my salary, and this divorce boom has given me more material than ever to dissect all the different ways a relationship can go belly-up.

The pandemic has not only exacerbated existing problems, but also introduced completely new ones. The usual suspects behind relationship trouble (think sex and household chores) loom even larger when you're together 24/7, while entirely new issues—like overhearing your partner's weird fake phone voice all day—are now added to the mix. As Covid cases surge worldwide, it looks like the situation isn't changing anytime soon. So in the name of love, I'm here to share my wisdom. Standard relationship advice aside (don't take each other for granted, and just split the damn household chores 50-50, for the love of God), below are my top tips for surviving pandemic cuffing season with your quarantine qutie.

Be Mindful About Sex

I can't tell you how many marriages I've seen implode due to one person's refusal to accept even slight libidinal differences in their partner. If I had a dollar for every shitty guy who's told his wife some version of, "Sex X times per week is the only way to prove you love me," and basically sexually bullied her into leaving him, I'd be halfway to a Peloton.

The thing is, it's unlikely that both (or all) members of a relationship will have the exact same sex drive. Stress can affect libido, and this moment in history is nothing if not stressful. Some people when stressed want nothing more than to get sweaty and forgetty; for others, that's the last thing they feel like doing. Scientific American recently reported that eating disorders, which have been shown to lower sex drives and generally increase anxiety around sex, have flourished during quarantine. Rates of depression and other mental health struggles are up too, according to the CDC.

So if your partner is feeling less interested in sex right now, don't take it personally or, God forbid, act resentful or unkind about it. Instead, focus on how this moment presents a great opportunity to create closeness in other ways. Which leads me to the next tip….

Explore New Types of Intimacy

Possibly the most common question I hear about pandemic relationships is some variation on, "How do we keep it fresh?" The people who asked were probably looking for an answer like, "Try anal!" But if the solution were as simple as a new position or toy, I'm guessing my friends would have already figured it out. Instead, I recommend experiencing your partner in new ways by breaking down usual routines and barriers.

We're used to compartmentalizing our different identities—friend, partner, employee, etc. In normal times, we have some buffer space to mitigate the whiplash of juggling these identities; a date night, for example, can help ease the transition from roommate to lover. But a major divorce trend I've noticed is that when one compartment "wins"—for example, if both partners focus only on parenting and neglect the lover part, or both are workaholics that bone regularly but neglect the friend part—the end is near.

To salvage the relationship, break down those compartments. Having trouble going from Zoom-work mode to sexy mode? Try hanging out in skivvies and just talk or cuddle, without bumping uglies. (This is also a great way to cultivate sex positivity when stress is making you feel anything but.) If you don't normally hang out in the morning, try heading out for an A.M. walk with your partner. If you're on that millennial wine train every night, try spending a sober week together.

Remember, time spent together isn't necessarily quality time, no matter how close your WFH stations are. Make time specifically to do new things with your partner. Breaking down our usual barriers can be hard, but remember, lockdown has obliterated

many of those already: The relationship must evolve or die.

Do Take Distance; Don't Take It Personally

Many couples are used to being emotionally together whenever they're physically together. But now that many of us are spending pretty much all our time with our significant others, it can feel like emotional overload. Creating room for emotional distance can be awkward, but it's key. Here's how to design a new routine with some built-in distance.

Start by paying attention to your partner's cues. If they say they are in the mood for a solo video game or to watch a dumb show they know you don't like, tell them to go for it. Cultivate solo things you enjoy (such as your own embarrassing show preference) to occupy yourself during that time. You could each set individual personal goals, like learning an instrument or finally reading that Hamilton book everyone pretends to want to read, then support each other in reaching them—but pursue them separately. You'll share the experience of working toward something, but get your alone time too.

Overall, work on being okay with being together but not together. Assert your need for space—even if your partner might get offended. A little initial discomfort while setting a new routine will pay off to avoid major resentment down the line. And if you can, invest in noise-canceling headphones. (Trust me, just do it.)

I cannot emphasize this enough: Do not get married or have kids just because you feel like there's nothing else left to do.

Don't Rush Big Decisions Because You're Bored

I cannot emphasize this enough: Do not get married or have kids just because you feel like there's nothing else left to do or it's the logical next step. I've heard many divorcing couples admit these motivations, and I fully expect big business in a few years from all the pandemic pregnancies and engagements littering my timeline.

If you find yourself on the cusp of a big decision that wasn't on your radar pre-pandemic, hold off. Don't have the baby. Don't get the puppy. Don't buy the ring. This also applies to the decision to enter or stay in a relationship. Repeat after me: Loneliness and horniness alone are not good enough reasons to get cuffed!

So there you have it. I could go on for hours about the common pitfalls to avoid at any stage of a relationship (seriously, give me a cocktail and I'll do it), but these are my top tips for the long months of lockdown ahead. Please cuff responsibly, and, if you don't, just remember that the average cost of a divorce in the United States is $10,000. Act accordingly, lovers!

LUST FOR LIFE WITH GWEN WONG WAYNE

BY **GWEN WONG WAYNE**

PHOTOS BY **MARIO CASILLI AND GENE TRINDL.**

The world-hopping Bunny and April 1967 Playmate on her positive outlook, her plucky persistence and her quest for a new kidney

My life started on the other side of the globe in Manila, in 1942. I split my early childhood between the Philippines and Australia, then moved with my family to California when I was seven years old. In San Francisco we became American citizens, and then relocated briefly to Nevada and finally settled in Ohio, where my stepfather opened the first Chinese restaurant in Cincinnati. All this globe-trotting may have sparked my lifelong passion for exploration, and my endless curiosity!

I married young and had a son. My husband and I decided to move our family to Los Angeles, where two years later my daughter came along. Soon I started looking for a paying job. I had never worked a day in my life, but I was determined to earn a living.

My aunt was a Bunny at the Miami and New York Playboy clubs, and she had some great stories to tell about the clientele and great salary. I think she was the catalyst for my career with Playboy. It sounded like a great opportunity, so I sent in some Polaroids. I was asked to come to the Playboy office on Sunset Boulevard and meet with Dick Rosenzweig and Keith Hefner, who immediately asked if I could work at the Miami club. I couldn't leave my children, but Keith

An outtake by Mario Casilli from Gwen Wong's Playmate pictorial.

"I was never into drinking or drugs. I felt that getting high wouldn't solve my problems, and I wanted to be a good role model for my kids and take care of myself."

"Education is so important. Knowledge can get you everywhere and anywhere."

promised that when the L.A. club opened I would be one of the first to get a Bunny suit.

Four years later, when the club was interviewing hundreds of girls, I thought Keith had probably forgotten me. He had not. He was a man of his word, and I was in—yeah! I got a job as a Cocktail Bunny. I was so elated! At first I had a hard time learning all the drink orders, but I got the hang of it and was promoted to Training Bunny—an instructor for the new hires—a year or two later.

Early on I was approached about posing for PLAYBOY, but I was shy, so I rejected the offer. After a few years as a Bunny, my confidence grew and I felt more comfortable with the idea of being a Centerfold model. Soon I was the April 1967 Playmate—Playboy's second Asian American Playmate! Years later, Madonna paid homage to my Centerfold in a Vanity Fair photo. I was impressed; I thought it was great.

After my pictorial came out, I would go to conventions and meet my fans. The "old" Gwen would have been so shy, but working at the Playboy Club gave me the ability to communicate with just about anyone. Everyone was so complimentary, which meant a lot to me. As nice as that was, nothing compares to how I felt getting letters from American soldiers overseas in Vietnam. Their letters were so moving. I still get fan mail from PLAYBOY readers, many of whom weren't even alive in the 1960s. It's very touching, but nothing tops my mail from soldiers.

Two years after I became a Playmate, Playboy bought a luxury jetliner, nicknamed the Big Bunny, and wanted to hire "Jet Bunnies" to work on board. Every night I prayed to be chosen—I wanted to travel so badly! My prayers were answered. As a

One day I was shopping at Tiffany's, and David Bowie walked in. He asked me out, and I turned him down.

"My Centerfold photo! I look back on this image and think, Oh my God, my hair was three feet high!"

"Ever since I was young, I've been a foodie—I love cooking and enjoying food."

Jet Bunny I got to take exciting trips all over, from across the U.S. to Europe to Africa—places I had always dreamed about. I wished I could have been aboard the Big Bunny 24/7, but in between trips I kept my job at the L.A. club.

I had plenty of excitement in my life beyond Playboy too. One day I was shopping at Tiffany's, and David Bowie walked in. He asked me out, and I turned him down. Everybody was like, a"Do you know who that was? That was David Bowie!" But I didn't really care—I was too preoccupied with my kids and my work with Playboy to pay it any mind.

I loved being a Jet Bunny, but it was exhausting to co-parent two kids while being so busy traveling for work. I stepped back from the Big Bunny and enrolled at Woodbury University to pursue a bachelor's in interior design—Playboy helped cover some of my tuition and encouraged me to get my degree.

For four years I balanced Bunnyhood, motherhood and my duties as a student. I would wake up at the crack of dawn for class at 7:30, go to school, then shift gears for work, finishing at the club at 2:30 in the morning. Juggling everything was difficult, but earning a college degree was one of the best things I have ever accomplished. I never finished high school, so to earn that degree felt very validating. It's a highlight of my life because I worked so hard for it.

When I graduated, I felt it was time to retire my Bunny ears and tail. Ten years of my life were interconnected with Playboy; it was time for a change. I worked for an architectural firm and then joined CBS as a set-designer apprentice, working on the sets of shows like Cher, All in the Family and Wheel of Fortune. It was fun, but the 18-hour days didn't compel me to stick around.

After I left CBS I marched into a restaurant I liked in West Hollywood and asked for a job. I kept going in and pleading with them until they finally relented and hired me. It wasn't glamorous work—on my first day I had to stem 20 containers of strawberries—but I enjoyed myself. I later became a food tester for Bon Appétit magazine, which was one of my favorite jobs because I've always been a "foodie." (I own more than 3,000 cookbooks!) Eventually I got into silversmithing and jewelry-making. I've always been creative, which I probably got from my mom, a professional pianist and singer.

Gwen at the Lake Geneva Playboy Club, photographed by Mario Casilli.

"The people who came to the clubs were just trying to have fun and enjoy themselves! I never once heard a lewd comment."

I love learning new things, but I won't stick with something unless it envelops me. The same is true of my relationships—I was married two times, and each time returned to being single because marriage didn't suit me. I'm independent and like making my own decisions. I don't mind being by myself. But I have lost some of my freedom over the past 14 years because I've been coping with serious health issues. I had a disorder called amyloidosis and was later diagnosed with stage-four kidney disease. As a result, I've had to pull back from some of my beloved hobbies, including cooking, gardening, making art and volunteering. Sometimes, I've been able to combine a few of my interests into little projects. I took a six-month gardening class at a local university, then used those skills to teach underprivileged families how to grow and cook healthy food on a small budget.

Family is by far the most important thing to me. My children have sacrificed so much to help me. From morning to night, my son does nothing but take care of me; he is utterly devoted. Most people my age aren't eligible for kidney transplants, but because I've maintained otherwise good health, I'm on the list! I hope to get a kidney soon so I can not only get my life back, but also give my son his life back.

Despite my health worries, I have a very positive outlook on life. That's what keeps me going. No matter what you're going through, you have to appreciate life and everything you've been given. I have never stopped learning, loving, growing and opening my eyes to the magnificent wonders of the world. And I never will.

"I have art from all over the world around my house—it's a very eclectic collection!"

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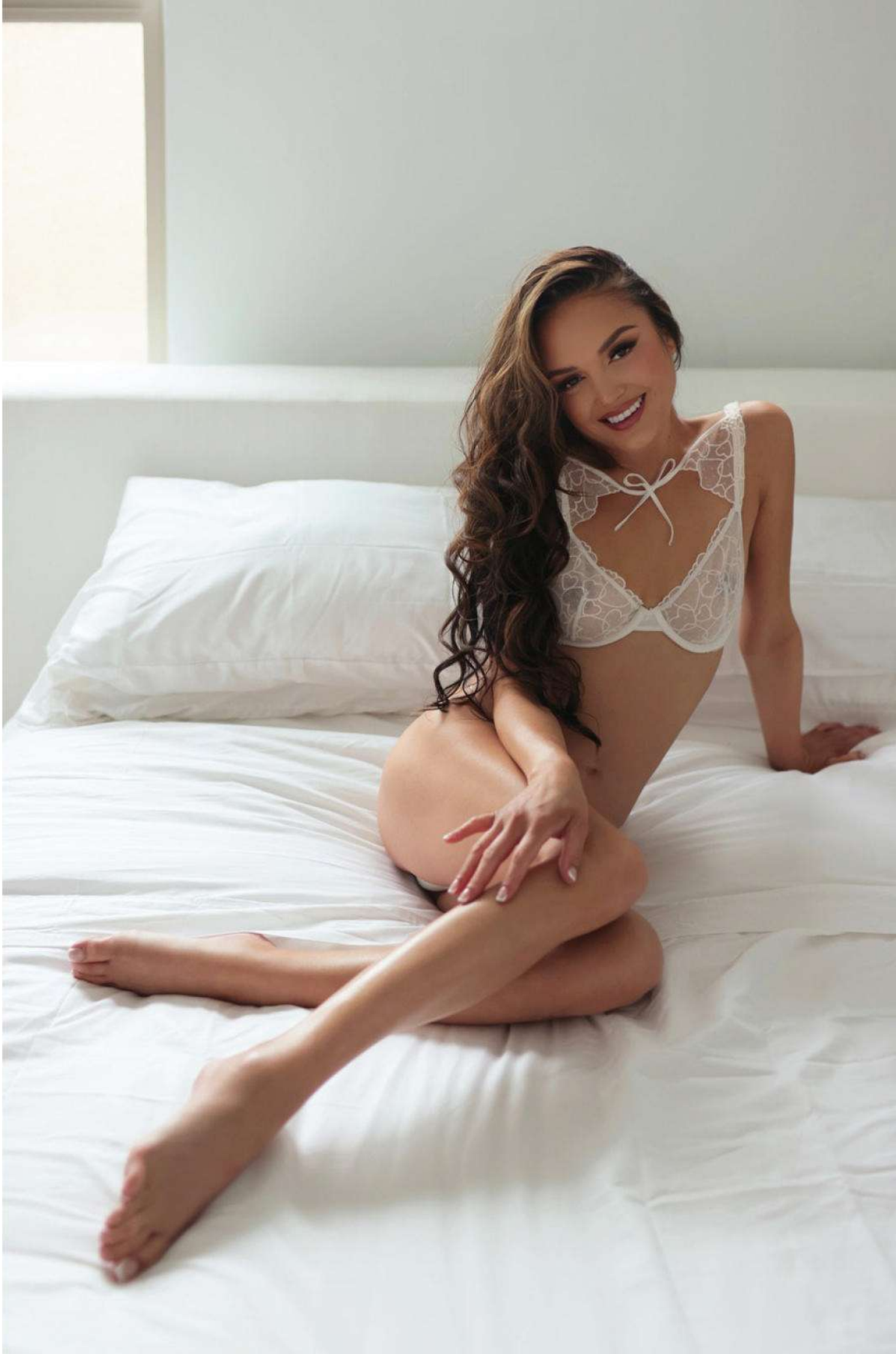
Driven

KAYLA YOUNG



Happy to have you on Playboy. What does a perfect day in your life look like from start to finish? A perfect day would be with music, coffee, and yoga to get my energy flowing. I end it with a little self-indulgence, dinner, a drink, and a relaxing bath to unwind.

What is one New Year's resolution you're truly committed to this year? Staying disciplined while still having fun. Finding that balance is everything to me.

Your ideal first date: Something chill but intentional- music playing, easy conversation, and no pressure. If the vibe's right, that's all that matters.

3 things in your handbag: lipgloss, my phone, and my signature scent.

Guilty pleasure: I love what I shouldn't, and I do it anyway.

What's one goal you didn't hit last year that you're determined to achieve this time? Being more fearless about going after what I want.

What big adventure or challenge are you planning to take on this year? Saying yes to what excites me and trusting my instincts.

What's something fun or unexpected about you that your fans might not know? I'm playful, flirty, and love to be caught off-guard.

What has been your proudest moment in your journey so far? Feeling beautiful and powerful in my own skin.

What music, movies, or books inspire your energy and creativity? Nothing ignites me like hip-hop; it moves me and makes me feel unstoppable.

What new doors or opportunities are you hoping to explore in your career? I'm drawn to opportunities that challenge me and make life a little more unforgettable.

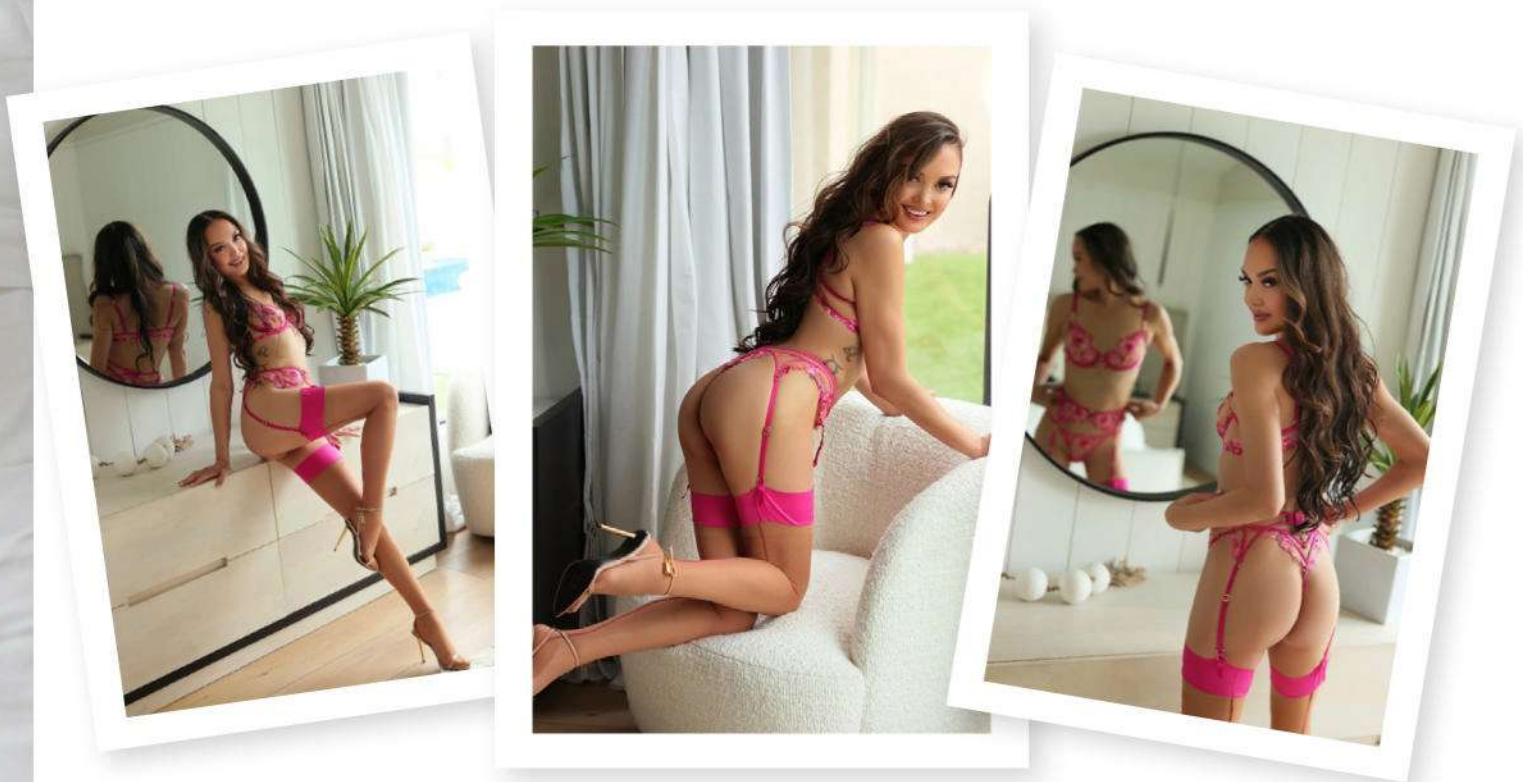
What message do you hope people take from your work on this feature? That confidence is magnetic, femininity is irresistible, and owning who you are is the sexiest thing of all.

How do you stay authentic in an industry that's constantly changing? I stay authentic by sticking to curiosity, honesty, and purpose, letting those guide me, not the trends.

When people look back at your career, what do you hope they say about you? That I was captivating, confident, and unapologetically myself.

What kind of impact do you hope to leave on the industry and the next generation of models? My goal is to make confidence contagious and authenticity irresistible, being yourself is always the power move.

What legacy do you want to leave not just as a model, but as a person? To be unforgettable, bold, and unapologetically me.



Playboy Interview

Chris Rock

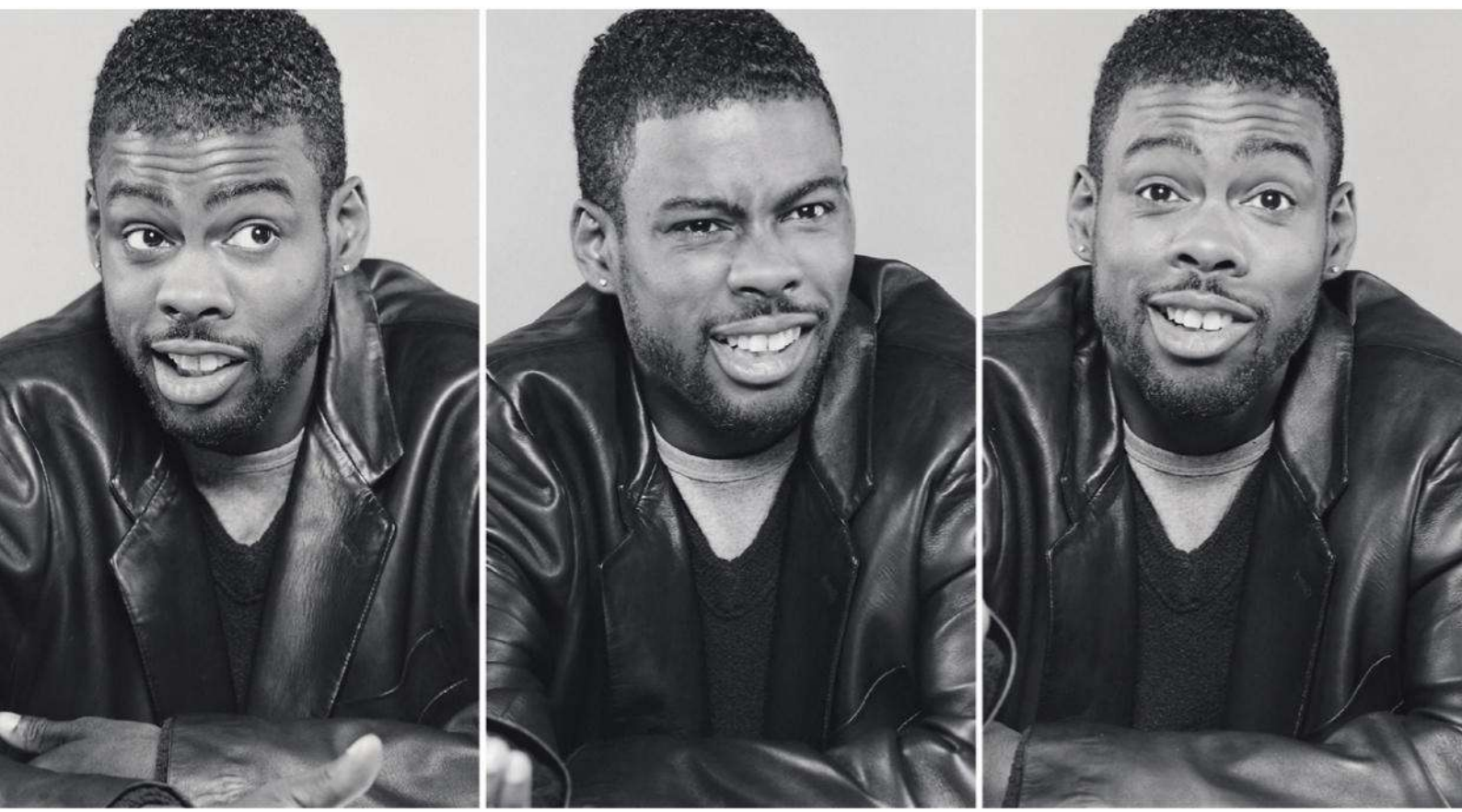
A candid conversation with America's best stand-up comic about why black people are so cool, why Marion Berry is scary and why there's nothing sexier than a big ass

INTERVIEW BY **DAVID RENSIN** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **DAVID ROSE**

If President Clinton isn't Chris Rock's biggest fan, he ought to be. Consider how the 34-year-old comedian defended the chief executive during a tour stop this past winter in Atlantic City:

"They let Clinton off last week. Let him off! That's right, just let him go," said Rock, pacing back and forth onstage, eyes wide with mock surprise. Suddenly, he stops. "Wait… who's booing? What the fuck you booing about? How you gonna boo head? Have you really thought this over? What the fuck did Clinton do? He lied about a blow job so his wife wouldn't find out. Is that so fucking hard to figure out? You got to have a trial for that shit? Get the Supreme Court involved? You could have taken that to The People's Court."

Most comics would have stopped there. Not Rock. "Some of this is Hillary's fault. That's right. I put blame where blame is due. Women, you know your man better than anybody else. You know if you got the crazy, needs-a-blow-job-every-day man. Sometimes you got to save your man from himself. Sometimes you got to sacrifice your lips for the good of the country. Hillary let us all down. She's the first lady. She's supposed to



be the first one on her knees. Monica shouldn't have stood a chance. p'What you want, girl? Get out of here. I got this under control.'"

Rock certainly has things under control. For almost five years he's been the hottest comic in the country, the darling of the public and his peers, a book author, recording artist, movie actor and host of HBO's Chris Rock Show. Credit his fearlessness at tackling issues such as race, politics, relationships, doctors, insurance, taxes, family dynamics, porn, pimps, crack, black leaders, false role models and the difference between the mall white people go to and the one they used to go to. Despite his success, Rock makes regular visits to the Museum of Television and Radio to study the likes of Woody Allen, Richard Pryor, Ernie Kovacs, Flip Wilson, Don Rickles, Groucho Marx, Steve Martin and Charlie Chaplin. And he still hones his material before last-call audiences at comedy clubs. Then it's all taken to the concert stage where, as in his Emmy award-winning HBO special, Bring the Pain, Rock works the audience with almost evangelical fervor.

Offstage, Rock is surprisingly calm and unassuming. He's a watcher, a thinker, curious. "I don't have to be the smartest person in the room," he says. "You don't learn that way." In other words, he's personable but not easy to get to know. But he can explain that too: "The only people easy to get to know are drug dealers and prostitutes. No matter where I go, people ask, p'How come you're so quiet?' Even in the library where you're supposed to be quiet. But I don't want to waste my powers. If Superman flew around all the time he might not be able to save Lois when it counts."

Rock was born on February 7, 1965 in South Carolina. His father, Julius, a union trucker, and mother, Rose, moved the family to Brooklyn. Eventually they settled on Decatur Avenue in Bedford-Stuyvesant, on one of the nicer blocks in a notoriously bad part of town. The family was close, and Rock, as the oldest of six, quickly absorbed his parents' work ethic. He took on odd jobs and, as he got older, often accompanied his dad on rounds delivering the New York Daily News. He was also bused to a nearly all-white school, where he was regularly beaten up and came to learn the many epithets whites have for blacks. He didn't make it through high school—by choice.

Once, in 1983, when he was 18, working at Red Lobster and a huge Eddie Murphy fan, Rock waited in line at Radio City Music Hall to get a ticket to Murphy's show. But when he heard about an open-mike night at Catch a Rising Star, he left Murphy behind and headed to the club, tried out, made the cut and joined the comedy circuit. One night in 1987 it was Murphy's turn to watch Rock, and he liked what he saw. With Murphy's backing. Rock appeared on an HBO's Uptown Comedy Express special. In 1990 he followed in Murphy's footsteps on Saturday Night Live.

Three years and a couple memorable characters (including Nat X) later, Rock asked SNL executive producer Lorne Michaels to let him go his own way. The pressure to be the new Eddie Murphy had taken its toll. He also admits that he didn't work as hard on the show as he did at partying and spending his newfound money. Even so, he appeared in a few films (including New Jack City), was briefly on In Living Color, made an album (Born Suspect) and, in 1993, starred in the rap parody CB4, which he co-wrote and co-produced. It opened at number one at the box office, but from there both the film and Rock's career went downhill. He ended up right back where he started: playing little clubs. And there was another problem. His act had gone limp. One night in Chicago, upstaged by comedian Martin Lawrence, Rock came back to his senses. As he told Vanity Fair, "Martin just annihilated me. Blew my ass away. That was a pivotal moment, because I wasn't really prepared. I'd been working with too many white guys."

The reality check paid off. Rock recommitted himself to his craft, often traveling the country with comedian Mario Joyner, "the funniest man I know." (Joyner is also one of Jerry Seinfeld's best friends.) Rock took more risks onstage and started talking about things that really interested him. In 1996 Politically Incorrect host Bill Maher asked Rock to be that show's correspondent at the presidential conventions. Rock also taped Bring the Pain, featuring his new strutting stage manner as well as his popular "Niggas vs. Black People" routine. It was only a small part of the special, and Rock doesn't do it anymore, but it hit home.

Rock followed the special with an album (Roll With the New), a best-selling book (Rock This!) and an HBO variety-talk show (The Chris Rock Show), now in its third season. He also relaunched a movie career, with roles in Lethal Weapon 4, Kevin Smith's Dogma and Nurse Betty with Morgan Freeman. He's writing films as well, with Paramount greenlighting his remake of Heaven Can Wait, called I Was Made to Love Her. Finally, there's another HBO special, Bigger and Blacker, taped at the Apollo Theater in Harlem, and a new album by the same name. And let's not forget his role as pitchman for 1-800-Collect and his playing the voice of Li'l Penny for Nike.

Playboy asked Contributing Editor David Rensin, who co-authored Rock's book, to hook up with the comedian while he toured to get ready for his HBO special. Rensin's report:

"Most people who don't know him think Chris Rock in private is just like he was in Bring the Pain: loud, in your face, wearing a silky silver jacket and unable to sit still. Nothing is further from the truth. Rock says he never wore that ensemble again. He's also more prone to lose himself in his Walkman than cut up after a show. Where many performers are super-energized and looking for trouble, Rock is easy-going and happy to watch a film on the tour bus with his players—Ali LeRoi, Lance Crouther and his wife, Robin Montague, and Wanda Sykes, all writer-performers on The Chris Rock Show. He may be the boss, but he acts like one of the gang.

"After a show at Princeton University, we traveled to the Trump Marina hotel and casino in Atlantic City. At two A.M. the troupe convened for breakfast in the coffee shop. Rock led a freewheeling dialogue that covered favorite music from the 1970s and 1980s, favorite comedians, sports, the neighborhood, relationships. Later, in the casino, Rock wanted to cut loose and gamble a bit, but then a phalanx of low-rollers approached for autographs. Said one obviously single woman, p'You're gorgeous. I want to marry you someday.' Smiling, then sighing, Rock begged off and said, 'My life has changed. I used to blend in around white people.'

"We were scheduled to begin our first session after lunch in his hotel room, but at the last minute Rock decided we should go to the local mall for CDs and a radio, and do the interview as we shopped. We'd made mall runs together before, but this time there were no pals along—and no bodyguard. We entered on the upper level and hadn't been inside 30 seconds when we heard the first of what would become an afternoon full of variations on, p'Yo. It's Chris Rock. Is that Chris Rock? Hey man, how you doing?' and autograph requests. Rock motioned toward the tape recorder and politely declined—unless there were children involved—and just told me to keep walking and talking."

PLAYBOY: Everyone's staring.
ROCK: Keep walking. I'm from Brooklyn. If you come from a bad neighborhood you learn to notice everything around you. What I notice is there's no one in here who can whip my ass. Besides, I got you with me.
PLAYBOY: And you feel safe? All right, let's start with the accolades. Vanity Fair: "Funniest, smartest comic working today." New York Post: "Utterly fearless." The Washington Post: "His show is unfailingly funny." Lorne Michaels: "Chris is the shock of ideas." For a guy who only a few years ago called himself washed up, how much do you like what you hear?
ROCK: [*Laughs*] What do you want me to say? It's great. I'm glad they feel that way. They're all good sources and none of them had to say nice things about me before, including Lorne. I'm just glad I could

do something they like.
PLAYBOY: How has all the attention changed you?
ROCK: I feel like Travolta in Phenomenon, when he got zapped by the light. Nothing's going wrong. Yet. I still live in the same house—I just haven't been there much because I'm extremely busy. But when I go around my old neighborhood and see my old friends, the differences between me and them still seem minuscule. I had a good dad and another guy didn't; I didn't get high and another guy did. That's scary. I sometimes feel like I'm one bad break from being back there and never making it out in the first place.
PLAYBOY: What do you miss most about your old life?
ROCK: Being able to take a walk by myself. Now if I'm alone everyone assumes I want company. Being famous is like having big tits. People always stare. In some ways that's good, because a girl with big tits can go anywhere and people always want to do whatever they can for her.
PLAYBOY: Sure. In hopes of getting laid.
ROCK: With me I guess it's the hope of getting money or hanging out—and then getting laid. My friends are always trying to drag me somewhere so they can get laid. Tell anyone you're my manager and watch what happens. [Laughs] I guess I've got some huge tits right now. But that's okay. I deal with all of it because they're my fans. It's like each one bought a thread on this coat I'm wearing. They bought the tips of my shoelaces. They helped pay for everything I've got. So the handshakes, the hugs, they're good. People are just trying to connect. It could be much worse.
PLAYBOY: As in no one's paying attention?
ROCK: No. As in they could be burning my football jersey and smashing my Heisman trophy.
PLAYBOY: How much does it bother you that O.J. is still able to go to the mall?
ROCK: I'm not happy about it. I'm not rejoicing. Yeah, we know he did it, but he's one guy I don't think is going to kill again.
PLAYBOY: When does celebrity get most weird for you?
ROCK: When I get to hear about which star someone in my family wants to fuck. When people want to know my mood before they speak to me. I used to see this around Eddie Murphy and Lorne Michaels. "How's he feeling? What's his mood?" It's hysterical. When I say something offhand and it comes back to me. If I'm mildly interested in something, my whispers are heard miles away. The next thing I know, someone is in my office wanting to make a deal. The other day I said, "You know, The PJs was funny last night." Two days later my manager gets a call: "They hear you like The PJs. They want you to be a voice on the show." For all I know I was overheard in an elevator. When people give me stuff I don't need. I get free food when there are homeless folks who can't get any. I get sneakers. I don't need sneakers; I can buy sneakers. It's all about big tits. And it's ironic that the guy who no one listened to, everybody listens to now. The guy everyone used to beat up, a lot of people are scared of now. The guy who couldn't get laid, everybody wants to fuck now.

"If Malcolm X were as small as Martin Luther King, he'd have believed in nonviolence, too. If Martin Luther King were as big as Malcolm X he'd have been talking about "let me whup some ass.""

PLAYBOY: That sounds like a positive development.
ROCK: I just wanted the opportunity to make people laugh in as many different forms as I could: books, albums, my TV show, as a producer, in the movies and, first and foremost, as a stand-up comic. All I wanted was options. And now I have them, because all being rich and famous really means is that you've got more options.
PLAYBOY: Didn't you once say that fame was bullshit?
ROCK: Here's what I meant: People say, "I want to be rich and famous like you." No, they just want to be rich. Believe me. Fame is only cool if you want to meet somebody.
PLAYBOY: And you have. We read about you in the gossip columns, at one big event or another, like Puffy Combs's birthday bash.
ROCK: I knew Puffy 10 years ago. I was a little sluggo-ing comedian and he used to drive some guy's car. I've known a lot of these people forever. Look at Lauryn Hill. To most people she just got famous. I did a gig with her and the Fugees seven years ago at some little college. I played Nintendo with Will Smith 10 years ago, in Philadelphia at his crib, when I was in town doing a gig at the Funny Bone for $800. Talented people tend to hang out together. They know who's got the stuff. If you respect someone's work it's worth a dinner or two. Plus, when you're all in the same business there's the safety factor. We don't need shit from each other. We're not put in the position to turn people down; that happens too many times when you hang out with people who don't do what you do. Does that make sense without making me sound like a snob?
PLAYBOY: Is that something you and your friends discuss?
ROCK: Who asked for what is one of the biggest topics of conversation. Everybody tries to top each other: "So-and-so wants me to help him buy a Ferrari." "So-and-so asked me for 50 large." "My uncle is trying to buy a fleet of school buses." Everybody's got some crazy tale. The best I ever heard was when a friend of mine, who will remain nameless, went on a date with a girl and had sex with her, and before she even left she asked him to help her buy a house.
PLAYBOY: Did he?
ROCK: No. But I told him, "Your time together must have been really bad for her to say, 'You owe me now!'"
PLAYBOY: Will these observations ever end up as comic material?
ROCK: No. When I'm onstage I make $300 a week—though maybe I should give myself a raise to $500 for the millennium. No one wants to hear about my money. Nobody wants to hear about me hanging out with whoever's famous. Nobody wants to know about what a hassle it is sometimes to sign autographs. The fans just want me to be one of the guys. Be down. People want to hang out with their favorite comedian. They want to feel like he's the missing guy in their crew. "Fuck, I wish Chris was hanging." "Wouldn't it be great if Sandler was here tonight?" They want to feel comfortable with that guy. In their shoes, I did too.
PLAYBOY: How badly do you want Adam Sandler's kind of success?
ROCK: His success is nice. We both have the same philosophy: Work

ios

work work, work work, work work work work. Album, movie, movie, album, movie, album. Get it out there. He's also one of the funniest guys. As big as he is, he's still underrated. He's a great stand-up comedian. Sandler's like Steven Wright with a dick—not that Steven Wright doesn't have one. I mean Sandler has an observational quality like Steven Wright, but his one-liners tend to be raunchier than Wright's.

PLAYBOY: And your approach to comedy is sort of like a fighter's.

ROCK: The crowd gives me a four-minute cushion: "Hey, he's famous. We saw him last month and he made us laugh." I try to hit them. Immediately. I don't try to fluff it that much, because a man's behavior is dictated by his physicality. I'm like a lightweight fighter, so I tell more jokes than a big guy. I've got to throw a lot of jokes. If Malcolm X were as small as Martin Luther King, he'd have believed in nonviolence, too. If Martin Luther King were as big as Malcolm X he'd have been talking about "let me whup some ass." It's no coincidence that the little guy was nonviolent and the big guy was violent.

PLAYBOY: Why did you choose to become a comedian?

ROCK: It's the only good deed I can do. I've never been talented at anything else, like sports or school. The only other thing that sparked my interest as a kid was being a civil rights attorney, or a reverend—that is, if I could find a religion that didn't dog people out and wasn't on some level racist, sexist and homophobic. Yeah, I'd probably preach the gospel.

PLAYBOY: But your act is already more than jokes. As Lorne Michaels said, you're the shock of ideas.

ROCK: I'm just a comedian, man. Just a comedian. The media think I'm out there with an agenda. No. That's Jesse's job. That's Sharpton's job. Everybody's looking for the leader. Everybody's looking for the next guy, and they always try to pin it on entertainers and athletes. But I'm not a candidate, and I'm not a messenger.

PLAYBOY: So you say and no doubt mean, yet your fans take your observations to heart. And the critics see all sorts of wisdom in your observations.

"I'm just a comedian, man. The media think I'm out there with an agenda. No. That's Jesse's job. That's Sharpton's job."

ROCK: People also listen to Urkel. Oprah says what I say, in her own way. A million rappers: Ice Cube. Chuck D. Public Enemy. NWA. And they did it years ago. I just happen to be the quotemeister right now—people are repeating things I've said, in other contexts. I just talk about what interests me. That's the most important thing: Can I interest myself? I don't want to be bored up there, because you'll be bored if I'm bored. And I don't want to sound like other comedians. I don't want to have the airplane hunk about seat backs and tray tables.

PLAYBOY: So what's the gospel according to Chris Rock?

ROCK: [Pauses] If anything, I'm not a hater. I'm probably the only black comic who isn't homophobic, who doesn't have a big fag hunk in his act.

PLAYBOY: How do you feel about white people?

ROCK: I look at the individual. I probably could hate white people as a group, because when I went to school white kids would get together and beat the shit out of me. I'm still a little scared when I see whites in a group, but I've learned that all groups are stupid. What I hate is anyone who knows better yet chooses to be racist. On the other hand, if you don't know any black people and all you get is what you see in the news, I almost don't blame you for being a racist. But if you know a cool brother down the block, if you know me and you're still a racist, then you're a fucking idiot.

PLAYBOY: But you're not afraid to make fun of blacks or whites.

ROCK: [Long pause, shakes his head] I hate that hunk of mine, sometimes.

PLAYBOY: The "I love black people but I hate niggas" routine?

ROCK: Yeah, I'm so tired of that shit. Sometimes that's all people write about me, like I'm a one-joke comic or Ritchie Valens, only known for "La Bamba." They ignore everything else I've said and focus on that one thing.

PLAYBOY: It's certainly received the most attention.

ROCK: But if I didn't have the relationship stuff in my act, I wouldn't sell as many seats. No way in the world I'm playing these big houses just off so-called political shit. The relationship stuff sells the tickets, along with the stuff about insurance and doctors and malls. I talk about things that the average man cares about, stuff I care about. I've got insurance. I'm paying my mother's insurance bills. I'm thinking about the hypocrisy of the whole thing. Even when I was a kid, when I had my first car, it was like, Let me get this straight: The worse the neighborhood you live in, the more insurance you have to pay? Women in the inner city have to pay more for diapers and milk because they have to get them at the minimart because no grocery will build there? How fucking ignorant is that injustice?

PLAYBOY: True, but why does that make the "I hate niggas" material any less important?

ROCK: [*Sighs*] It's just that I hate white reporters talking to me about it without ever having watched Bring the Pain. They always ask, "How does a black audience deal with that stuff you're saying?" Take a look at the show! Were there any white people there that night? Not many. Were people laughing? Yes. What's the fucking question again? I'm in the middle of Maryland. Not even D.C., but the middle of the ghetto, in a theater that we spent money on to make look better—and it's full of black people. I purposely went into the hood to do it. But some writers act as if I did Bring the Pain in front of a joint session of Congress. I think what they're really saying is, "I like it, but how could black people possibly like it, since you're making fun of them?" Well, it looked to me like they were laughing. Whatever you see black people laughing at, that's what's funny to black people. It's like me going up to Garth Brooks after he plays the Grand Ole Opry and saying, "How do country people deal with your act?" Huh?

PLAYBOY: How are black audiences different from white audiences?

ROCK: For one thing, the black audience goes everywhere first. They dictate everything from music to comedy to fashion; they point to where the white audience is going to go. Who's going to be the hottest comedian in the year 2001? I don't know—but he's working in front of a bunch of brothers right now. Who'll be the hottest rapper? I don't know, but young black kids know right now. Black people are about the future. White people are all about the past and how to return to the fucking glory they had. Black makes everything cool. What are the Spice Girls without the black girl? Just three white bitches who can barely sing. What's the Rat Pack without Sammy Davis? A bunch of fucking alcoholics. My core audience is probably black, but I don't think white people want to see me water down my thing. The white

people who are into me aren't afraid. They want me to be me.

PLAYBOY: Perhaps the question you don't like stems from white journalists having to be so cautious. They can't get away with saying "nigger." They'd be crucified. So they don't understand when black people laugh at someone who does.

ROCK: White people can't go around saying "nigger." That's a rule. Black people can; it's like calling your kid an idiot. Only you can call your kid that. Someone else calls your kid an idiot, there's a fight. You know, I said some ill shit in that special. I did jokes about porn and killing the president and hitting women. I had a guy beating a woman, and her complaining about it on Oprah. But no one mentioned that to me. Here's why: Race is big. It's the last frontier.

PLAYBOY: Who takes the truth about themselves better, blacks or whites?

ROCK: Probably blacks. We're used to being criticized and we deal with it easier. We're always expecting the hit.

PLAYBOY: How concerned are you about media backlash? You're on top now, but that also makes you a target.

ROCK: I don't worry about the mainstream media. They don't have much to do with making black artists succeed. There's no successful black artist without 90 percent of the black vote. Any black artist with longevity, black people already love, and he'd be successful—though maybe not stupendously—without the crossover. If white people had never gotten Richard Pryor he'd still have a big house and money. Bernie Mac, Jamie Foxx, Frankie Beverly, they all live really well. Steve Harvey lives really, really well.

PLAYBOY: Would black recognition be enough for you?

ROCK: Yeah.

PLAYBOY: So why the desire to cross over?

ROCK: Financial reasons. Black artists don't want white people to like them. That's real Uncle Tom. It's the money. Everybody wants to make the most dough they can because we're in an industry where you can be over at any moment. The idea is to cross over to white dollars, not to white people.

"Alex and I weren't as close as we had been. But neither of us has had problems getting along with teammates before, so I don't see why we would have problems now. It gives the media something to write about, though."

PLAYBOY: What's the best career advice you ever got?

ROCK: Before I taped Bring the Pain I bumped into Andrew Dice Clay. Anybody who knows Dice knows he can't help but give you advice every time he sees you—good or bad. But when you really think about it, who knows more about doing an HBO special than Dice? Who's gotten more out of being on HBO than Dice? Who filled up Madison fucking Square Garden? He said, "Watch Rocky and you'll remember why you got started. Everything will come back to you." They say I'm big, but I can't ignore a guy who filled the Garden. And he was right. I watched Rocky and it all came into focus. It's the best inspirational movie in the world. All schoolkids should be forced to watch Rocky. The lesson is try your best, no matter what, and you'll feel good at the end. Be better than your best. That's my career philosophy. Buster Douglas was a bum. But one night he fought Tyson better than his best, and he won.

PLAYBOY: Do you have any advice for Tyson?

ROCK: Watch Rocky [laughs]. Stop drinking. Mike is insecure. The last time I bumped into Mike was at some show at Roseland. We ended up going to Jersey to a party. It was two or three in the morning, and we were both sitting there trying to figure out if we could have gotten our wives if we weren't rich. This big motherfucker and this little guy, both from Brooklyn, connected on the same thing. We couldn't figure it out. Neither one of us was confident enough. Both of us were like, "Nah, nobody likes us for us." It says nothing bad about our wives and everything about us.

PLAYBOY: You recently went to Richard Pryor's birthday party. What's he like these days?

ROCK: It's really sad. He can't talk. Richard fucking Pryor, the greatest orator, the greatest comedian of all time, and he can't talk. What the fuck is that? It's like Fred Astaire being paralyzed.

PLAYBOY: What made Pryor great?

ROCK: He was honest.

PLAYBOY: The same has been said of you. According to HBO president of programming Chris Albrecht, you can "get away with being honest in a way few people can."

ROCK: I don't get away with anything. I just do it. It has to be instinctual. The minute that I start to analyze my act, I'm dead.

PLAYBOY: Come on. Maybe you want to play it down, but you must think this stuff through.

ROCK: Sometimes when I come off the stage I feel like the Incredible Hulk, when he turns back into David Banner. Did I kill anybody? Did I hurt anybody? I feel like that a lot, especially when it's a good night. I get in a weird zone because my act gets my complete attention. In sex, my mind can drift, but onstage it's do or die. When I walk into a comedy club I want motherfuckers to be scared I'm going on. "Oh shit. I don't want to follow him." I don't want the he's-famous-let's-cut-him-some-slack funny. When Rodney Dangerfield walks into the Improv, they know he's getting ready to bring the noise. It's like, get the fuck back! This guy is 70-something and he's going to blow everybody off the stage. That's what I want.

PLAYBOY: How do you feel about once having been called the new Eddie Murphy?

ROCK: Every hot black guy is the new Eddie Murphy. But I think I've established myself as my own guy. The first time I heard it I felt a bit of pressure; more than, say, Damon Wayans or Sinbad did, because folklore has it I was discovered by Eddie Murphy. People were looking for that from me.

PLAYBOY: Is the folklore bullshit?

ROCK: The average person thinks I was driving a bus and Eddie said, "Hey, this guy is funny." I had been in the comedy business for a few years. Eddie said I was funny on camera and in print—which is a bigger thing than any manager or agent could do—and he got me on this show called The Uptown Comedy Express, an HBO special he developed and produced. When the funniest guy in the world says you're funny, well, you—

PLAYBOY: Feel like, holy shit, what do I do?

ROCK: I just did what I was doing and people said, "He's funny, but he's no Eddie Murphy."

PLAYBOY: But only a few years earlier you were 18 and standing in line at Radio City on your night off from a job at Red Lobster, waiting to get a ticket to Murphy's show, when you suddenly split to do open-

microphone night at Catch a Rising Star. Murphy was and is your hero, yet you blew off the show. What possessed you?

ROCK: Something called to me. Every comedian will tell you the same thing. There's no big revelation. It seemed like a better option than waiting in line.

PLAYBOY: Was it your first time onstage?

ROCK: Yeah. There was a guy on my block who co-managed R&B singer Freddie Jackson. He represented show business to me. I also knew Saturday Night Live was looking for people. So I told him, out of the blue, "Get me on Saturday Night Live." Obviously, I was an idiot at that point, thinking you could just get on Saturday Night Live. The guy said, "You have to go to the Comic Strip, you have to audition. You need to go to the clubs." I guess it put a little germ in my head—so one night I did it. Or maybe it was because I was at the end of a long-assed line and probably wasn't going to get in to see Eddie anyway.

PLAYBOY: How big a career jump was getting on Saturday Night Live?

ROCK: Huge. To this day, the biggest. It was the last break that actually changed my life. When I got on Saturday Night Live I moved from a studio apartment into a huge duplex, I bought a car, I helped my mother get a house. Nothing like that has happened to me since. Even today the quality of my life is pretty much the same. When I used to get $50 or $300 a gig, every gig would change my life. It meant I was going to eat differently. I might buy sneakers so I'd have a new wardrobe. Today the only changes are more artistic options, and a lot of white people speak to me.

PLAYBOY: What went wrong at Saturday Night Live?

ROCK: Lorne hired me because I was funny and because In Living Color had just come on. I don't think it was coincidence. The first year I was alone, which was perfect. If you're black you might as well be the only black person there. You're competing enough as it is to get a little screen time. Then it was me, Tim Meadows and Ellen Cleghorne. We all wanted to star in our own pieces, but we weren't all going to get on each show—even if all our stuff was great. The show is no different than society. But I'll never dog Saturday Night Live, because it's the best thing that's ever happened to me. Another problem is that I followed Eddie Murphy. Whatever I did was compared with him, and that's unfair. I had tough shoes to fill. I had the Larry Holmes gig.

PLAYBOY: What's your relationship with Eddie like these days?

ROCK: We're cool. I always looked at Eddie like my older cool cousin, the one, when you're a kid, that you can't wait to see because he's got the tapes and cool clothes. He's getting laid and he's got stories. I'm never going to be Eddie's equal, and friends have to be equals to be friends. But that said, we're better friends than we were before.

PLAYBOY: Didn't you also party a lot during your three years on Saturday Night Live, sometimes to distraction?

ROCK: We all partied. I also got a big-ass apartment, a convertible Vette. What's cornier than a red Vette driving through Brooklyn? How obnoxious is that? I was ridiculous. Lorne Michaels told me, and he was right: "Everybody loses their first money. No matter who you are, you're going to lose your first money." That first hunk I got, though it couldn't set me up for life, could have helped. But I lost it. I spent it on shit I couldn't afford: a car, not paying taxes. My whole life was just trying to fuck girls I had no business fucking—and I succeeded on several occasions [*laughs*]. Ah, those were the days.

PLAYBOY: Sounds like you miss them.

ROCK: I miss the innocence. Otherwise I was tired, I looked like shit. In pictures of me back then I look like I was on the pipe.

PLAYBOY: You were hot, left Saturday Night Live, made a couple movies and then you were gone. You couldn't even get an agent. What happened? How did you work your way back?

ROCK: After Saturday Night Live, I co-wrote, produced and starred in CB4. Probably made $18 million. We did it with Brian Grazer and Ron Howard's company, Imagine. Ron Howard was in the movie, but he cut himself out. He saw how shitty the movie was and said, "Hey, I can't be in this." In his scene he says, "When I first heard the song 'Sweat of My Balls'…" Ron Howard saying "sweat of my balls" is pretty funny. Cut to three years later and I get a call to do Sgt. Bilko with Steve Martin. I thought, great, but it was essentially an extra part. Two lines. I felt like shit, but you've got to do what you've got to do. A lot of guys wouldn't go to the audition. I do what I've got to do. The worst gig in show business is better than the best job out of it. I would have been the stand-in for the extra if I had to. And if I didn't take that extra part I wouldn't be where I am right now. That same year I did a guest shot on Fresh Prince of Bel Air. It was a horrible episode. I had to be Will Smith's ugly date, so I was in drag. Barely funny. I had to do it, though. From Saturday Night Live to New Jack City to CB4 to being dressed up like an ugly bitch for Will Smith.

"Black makes everything cool. What are the Spice Girls without the black girl? Just three white bitches who can barely sing. What's the Rat Pack without Sammy Davis Jr.? Just a bunch of fucking alcoholics."

PLAYBOY: Did you have to kiss him?

ROCK: No, but I'm glad they offered me the part. I needed it at the time. And guess what? People on the street were going, "Hey, I saw you on Fresh Prince of Bel Air," "Hey, I saw you in Sgt. Bilko." It kind of kept me alive. It's not shoveling shit, but I definitely went backward to get forward. I did Sgt. Bilko because it was Grazer, Steve Martin, Dan Aykroyd, Phil Hartman. I got to be around all those guys, even if it was only for two days. There was some value in doing it. Association brings assimilation, as my mother says.

PLAYBOY: How often do you get back to the old neighborhood?

ROCK: I still talk to people there. But one of the last times I went around I almost got carjacked. This guy was following me; I ran a light and he ran the light. When you grow up in Bed-Stuy you have an extra sense for trouble. The next thing I know, I'm on a high-speed chase with three cars behind me. I was probably going about 60 or 70 miles an hour through the streets of Brooklyn, running lights.

PLAYBOY: What would have happened if they'd caught you?

ROCK: They would have taken me to my crib, made me open up, taken everything, duct taped me and maybe killed me. They wanted my shit. And kidnapping's big. This is what's going on now. The only guys my age with dough who aren't entertainers sell drugs. Drug dealers keep their money in their house. I don't keep money in mine, but these young guys probably think I have a million dollars under my bed.

PLAYBOY: Sounds like you can't really go home again.

ROCK: I'm not going back there like "look at me." I like to sit on the stoop and talk. Usually it's okay. When I first get there it's an immediate, "Chris is here!" But that always happened no matter what job I had. As far as my neighborhood is concerned, I made it 10 years ago when I was in the movie I'm Gonna Git You Sucka. Do you know how far that is from Bed-Stuy and hanging out watching my friends sell lactose as coke? Or making crack: cocaine, lactose, vitamin B-12, a little baking soda. The common Friday night thing was to get with a bunch of friends at six o'clock. But then people started getting high and no one would go anywhere. It would start with the first beer, to the first joint, to the first snort, to freebasing. Every fucking Friday. I never got or get high, thank God.

PLAYBOY: Did that self-destructive experience make it any easier for you to understand Chris Farley's death?

ROCK: No. I took it really hard. He was a great friend. A good, jolly—I know that's a fat word—guy to be around. He needed hugs but he was quick to give them too. When I was off the show, with no career, he and Sandler were the only guys who'd call to see how I was doing. Farley was way funnier than we've ever seen him be. He was more like W.C. Fields than the character he usually played. He had a "get away from me kid, you bother me" funny mean streak, but then he'd give the kid a big hug. But in movies he always played this fat guy who didn't know any better, who straightened up at the last minute.

"Everybody wants to make the most dough they can because we're in an industry where you can be over at any moment. The idea is to cross over to white dollars, not to white people."

The last time I saw him I pretty much had to get rid of him. I was in Chicago, on tour, and Chris came to see me. He was so fucked up. He was screaming. He wanted more booze. We had made plans, but I had to say, "You know what? I'm going to bed." It was only midnight. Right then he kind of straightened out for a minute: "Come on, Rocker. Come see my apartment. Come on, Rocker." I couldn't, and that's the last time I saw him. He died a month after that.

I miss Farley a lot. Phil Hartman too. It made for a really shitty year, losing both of them. The worst thing that they did was try to make other people happy offstage. They went out of their way for other people for the sake of their own happiness, and it killed both of them.

PLAYBOY: What was your relationship with Hartman like?

ROCK: Phil was a mentor. He was the most prepared guy at Saturday Night Live. He could also show you about the good life. Sometimes he'd call me into his office and say, "Hey, look at this picture of my new boat." "Hey, here's the house I'm buying. You work hard, you can get this too." But Phil had a weird marriage. He was always going through some shit with it, and I never liked to spend time with them as a couple. Every now and then he'd talk about it. I remember him saying, "Okay. If I lose half my shit I'll have to be on the show another three years." In part because of what happened, I'm really into my own happiness and my own comfort now in a way I wasn't before. I'm probably a rougher person to be around than before they died. I would never rock the boat. I'd go along with the program even if I was miserable. The old me would take shit for a while and then explode. After Farley and Hartman died, and died not happy, the idea of toeing the company line made me think, Fuck this. I'm more assertive now. I've found the courage to say no. They say life is short. No, it's not. Life is long. Life is excruciatingly long if you make bad decisions and do things you don't want to do.

PLAYBOY: Let's talk about what you want to do—and what you have done for three seasons: The Chris Rock Show. Why did you want to try talk on cable, particularly when you could have had your own sitcom?

ROCK: I had nothing else happening at the time. I was bubbling under, doing Politically Incorrect, doing Li'l Penny. I had done Big Ass Jokes, which won the Cable Ace award. I was on a little upswing. It was HBO's idea. It was like, whoa, get my own show? This is great. We made the deal before Bring the Pain, and the success of the special just made things go quicker.

PLAYBOY: You're a TV interviewer now. Who's your role model?

ROCK: Bob Costas. Best in the world. I saw Bob Costas interview Little Richard once. At the time Little Richard was a fucking joke to me. Just a clown. When Costas got through with him, I was Little Richard's biggest fan. I saw Bob do that with a lot of people. He had all the best questions.

PLAYBOY: What have you learned?

ROCK: I look at an interview like I look at a woman I'm trying to get with. You have to avoid the obvious, especially if you're not a good-looking guy. I'm not, so it's all going to be verbal. If she's tall, don't mention it. If her name is Eve, don't say a joke with Adam in it. The second rule is to never ask a question if you know the answer. If somebody's got a hit movie, "Boy, your movie's really big. How does it feel?" What are they going to say? They're going to say it feels great. Why ask that? Rule three is you can get away with a lot if you say "with all due respect."

PLAYBOY: When you interviewed Magic Johnson why did you concentrate on his HIV? What wasn't obvious about that?

ROCK: Who has asked Magic Johnson, "How has it affected your business?" I even gave Magic one of those hard-to-ask questions: "Do women still hit on you?" His ego wants to say yes, but he has to say no. He kind of went in the middle of it: "Women like successful men." That's what you're looking for. He was great. He was the best guy I've probably had on this year. [Smiles] You know, I think he's got a new strain of AIDS, the kind that makes you gain weight and make money.

PLAYBOY: Why wasn't he any good when he did the interviewing?
ROCK: Magic Johnson is supposed to suck at being a talk show host just like I'm supposed to suck at being point guard for the Los Angeles Lakers. It's no dis to him. He gave it a good shot.
PLAYBOY: Will former D.C. mayor Marion Barry ever come on your show—especially after you made fun of him in Bring the Pain?
ROCK: I bumped into Marion Barry. He shook my hand. He said I shouldn't do the jokes. And as I looked in his eyes I realized, if he wasn't the mayor or a public figure, he'd beat the shit out of me. He's not the mayor right now. If I bumped into Marion Barry again he'd probably kick my fucking ass. No doubt in my mind. If nobody was around, Marion Barry would beat the shit out of me.
PLAYBOY: So that's why you have a bodyguard.
ROCK: Yes. Just for Marion Barry [laughs].
PLAYBOY: What's your take on the tragedy at Columbine High in Colorado?
ROCK: It's a big gun problem. And you know, one kid was on Prozac, but the toxicology report found no Prozac in him. I don't want to sound insensitive, but what ever happened to just being crazy? Everyone's looking for reasons, but no one's mentioned that maybe those guys were just fucking nuts. When I was a kid, those kids would have been put on a yellow bus and sent to a little classroom away from everybody, and nobody would have been shot. When I went to school, there were probably a couple kids who didn't belong, but no one got shot.
PLAYBOY: Maybe it's just frustrated middle-class white kids with access to guns who don't know how else to deal with not being popular.
ROCK: Right. Black people can't go, "I'm going to buy machine guns." They'd never leave the store. The cops would be called immediately. You can't buy any bomb-making stuff either if you're black. You can't even say "bomb" if you're black. As soon as you say "bo" you're arrested. B-o. You don't even get to the m. It's true! There are no black serial killers, right? You know why that is? Because a brother does one murder and they get him. It's like we're fucking suspects for everything. The white man gets the benefit of the doubt. I'm sure there are black people who would love to be serial killers, but they've never been given the chance. It's really sad. The law comes down on us too fucking hard.
PLAYBOY: Can the media and the internet and goth music be blamed for what happened?
ROCK: Blame the media? What was Hitler listening to? How come no one ever questions what Hitler was listening to? What movie did Hitler see that fucking set him off? He was just a crazy, evil guy. This whole "listened to" thing is bullshit to me. If you're dumb enough to kill somebody because you listen to Marilyn Manson, then we ought to get you early. We ought to eliminate you right away. What's Milosevic listening to? He's killing everybody, and I'm sure he's not listening to Marilyn Manson. What were they listening to during feudalism? The only people happy about those kids being shot are JonBenet's parents. They're like, "Hey, boy, now they're going to leave us alone." [Pauses] That's a joke.
PLAYBOY: Let's move on. Your movie career is in high gear. Besides the stuff we've seen you in, what are you being offered?
ROCK: Mostly con men. A numbers runner in Beverly Hills. Or I steal cars in Beverly Hills. That's the big thing: a fish out of water. You know what? I've got money and I'm famous and when I'm in Beverly Hills I am a fucking fish out of water. I walk into Barneys and I can afford whatever I want, but I'm still a freak. Jerry Seinfeld walking through Bensonhurst is a fish out of water. You don't need to be a fucking drug kingpin to be a fish out of water. Eddie called me a couple months ago and said, "I see what you're doing, the supporting actor thing here and there. Don't do that no more. You have to star in your next movie. Now's the time. Strike while the iron is hot. Don't fucking blow this."
PLAYBOY: Did you take his advice?
ROCK: Yes. I can't just wait around to be cast. The really successful guys are the ones who develop their own shit. So I co-wrote a script with my guys, and Paramount greenlighted it and we're going to start shooting in January.
PLAYBOY: What's it about?
ROCK: It's a remake of Heaven Can Wait or Here Comes Mr. Jordan. It's called There Goes Mr. Rock [smiles]. No, it's called I Was Made to Love Her.
PLAYBOY: You're in Kevin Smith's newest film, Dogma, as Rufus, the 13th apostle. The movie's subject matter—a critique of Catholicism—has caused a fair amount of controversy. Is that what attracted you to the project?
ROCK: Kevin's other movies, Clerks and Chasing Amy, just spoke to me.
PLAYBOY: What was it like working with Smith?
ROCK: Kevin holds the most intense rehearsals. When you get to the set, your lines and blocking have to be second nature. You're prepared. You're in shape. It takes hours—morning until night. I wanted to do it, especially since I'm not an actor like the other people in the movie: Matt Damon and Ben Affleck, Linda Fiorentino, Alan Rickman, Salma Hayek. I need the extra work and it was like free acting school. It's definitely the best work I've done. It broke me out of all my moves.
PLAYBOY: How did that compare to your Lethal Weapon experience?
ROCK: In the beginning I was really scared because it was the fourth one, like Alien 4 and Batman 4. Part of what convinced me is that the script turned out good. Also, Joel Silver admitted to me that number three wasn't all that great. I figured, okay, if you're going in with that attitude, four is going to be okay.
PLAYBOY: How much did you have to bulk up?
ROCK: I just had to fight my ass off and get my lines up. I don't mean that in a bad way, but I was pretty much an extra. Lethal Weapon was a weird movie. I'd been filming for a month, or at least I'd been on the set for a month, and I hadn't done anything. Then, one day, the whole cast did The Rosie O'Donnell Show, and I did well. I killed m'em. But I'm a comedian. I'm supposed to do better than Danny Glover and Mel Gibson on a comedy show. When Joel Silver and Dick Donner saw it they said, "We've got to get him in the movie more!" It's like I'd inadvertently auditioned for a movie I was already in. From then on it was like, "Hey, we've got this scene for you." "Hey, what about this scene?"
PLAYBOY: In Nurse Betty you work with Morgan Freeman. Do older black men want to mentor you?
ROCK: Morgan's more of a mentor than Danny. I guess I look for it. I ask questions. Maybe I'll linger longer than I should. My dad's dead and I love guys my dad's age: "Tell me something I don't know, please." Any black guy in his 50s or 60s, I'm like, "Please talk to me. Pleeease." Danny is kind of eccentric; also smart and well educated. He knows African history, is very politically active. He told me about his college days, about the Panthers. It's a perspective I'm just not going to get from a white guy. In Nurse Betty Morgan Freeman has to kiss someone. Turns out it's the first time he has had to kiss a woman on-screen—and he's 60-whatever years old! That's got to be hard. Morgan is one of our best actors and, due to petty racism, no one's ever paired him with a woman, ever. Morgan fucking Freeman. You know how many ugly white guys get women in movies? When he told me I couldn't believe it.

PLAYBOY: Which of his movies is your favorite?
ROCK: Believe it or not, the most significant Morgan moment for me, and this sounds crazy, is Deep Impact. He plays the president of the United States, he's a black guy, and no one said shit. His color is never mentioned in the movie or in reviews. He is such a commanding presence that it's obvious he's the president. I don't think there's another black actor who could play the president without it being a big deal.
PLAYBOY: According to you we already have a black president: Bill Clinton.
ROCK: Yes, but I said it two years before all this impeachment bullshit, because of how much he was persecuted. I hate hearing people saying it now.
PLAYBOY: Why?
ROCK: Because after the Monica Lewinsky thing it was used to make it sound like this: Since Clinton—our black president—has low morals, so do my people. That's not what I meant. In an interview with The New York Times, the reporter asked me about Clinton and really tried hard to get me to say that. "Why do blacks support Clinton?" "We feel persecuted," I said. "We feel overwatched." He wanted me to say, "Because we all cheat" or whatever.
PLAYBOY: Most blacks supported Clinton.
ROCK: Blacks supported Clinton because Clinton supported blacks. It's that simple. Clinton appointed black people without making a fucking big deal out of it. He just did it. Any time the Republicans want to show off they say, "Hey, we've got J.C. Watts here! We've got a black guy." They have to point it out, which is racist in itself. Let's just be people. Clinton hires black people and doesn't say shit. If one fucks up, he'll hire another one. He'll hire the best person for the job, whatever their skin color.
PLAYBOY: Do you think Clinton committed perjury?
ROCK: Clinton was on trial for lying about something that wasn't even a crime. There was no crime committed before he had to answer the questions. That's what they tried to take him down for. That's ridiculous. Perjury because he didn't want to say he fooled around? Do you get an extra sentence if you tell the judge, "I wasn't speeding"? That's some shit they made up for John Gotti and Al Capone. Clinton is not Al Capone.
PLAYBOY: You mentioned Oklahoma Representative J.C. Watts. Do the words black Republican bother you?
ROCK: Not theoretically. It just confuses me that they want to hang out with guys who clearly don't like black people. Don't they realize that white Republicans are just letting them hang out so nobody can say they don't have any black guys around? It's a bold move on his part. It's nothing special to be a black Democrat, so that's one way to make a splash.
PLAYBOY: How did he do on your show?
ROCK: Even though he played to an uptown crowd that was probably 99.9 percent Democrat, he had the fucking audience. And he worked it. He explained his position in a coherent way that people could understand. I got some jabs in, but he had the audience—until he fucked up because he didn't know who George Clinton is [laughs]. I asked, "What do you do when George Clinton comes to town?" He said, "Who's George Clinton?" and the air went out of the studio.
PLAYBOY: How much does it bother you when you don't have the crowd?
ROCK: I've got the crowd. It's my show. It doesn't matter. That's why a lot of talk show guys fuck up. They think they have to get every joke. I figure if they like the guest, they like me. If everybody's funny, I'm funny. Do you want to be Magic Johnson and pass the ball and get everyone involved or do you want to be someone who scores 80 points a game but doesn't win shit? When Michael Jordan started passing the ball he started winning. Johnny Carson is the greatest assist man in the history of the game. The biggest mistake guys make is thinking they have to be the only funny one on their show. When I had on Darryl Hughley, he killed. He was so funny. That meant I looked great.

"Being famous is like having big tits. People always stare at you. In some ways that's good, because a girl with big tits can go anywhere she wants and people always want to do whatever they can for her."

PLAYBOY: Speaking of assists, why did you decide to fund the Howard University Lampoon?
ROCK: We need new black writers. It's the only way for us to get decent TV shows and movies. We can't sit around waiting for white guys to write good black shit. I'm reading submissions now. Then I'm going to assemble and edit the first issue.
PLAYBOY: Do you like any of the stuff that you've seen?
ROCK: Most of it's okay-to-bad, but that's how it is with all art. I figure if the writer is 18 and I get hold of him now and work on the bad habits, he might be a real writer in a year or two.
PLAYBOY: You're far more sophisticated than these kids. Can you let them be who they are?
ROCK: Yeah. I know they're kids. I'm not looking for stuff for my show. This is a college comedy paper. That's right: I grade papers. I'm Professor Rock.
PLAYBOY: What is the worst job you had as a kid?
ROCK: [Laughs] I used to clean up dog shit. No one walks their dogs in the freezing New York winter; they just let them shit in the backyard. When the spring thaw came there were a bunch of people on the block with shit all over, and I was the shit boy. The phone would ring: "Hey, can you come over and clean up my backyard?" They wouldn't say "clean up the shit," but I knew what time it was.
PLAYBOY: How old were you?
ROCK: Probably 12, 13. I took any job I could get. I liked having my own job. That's why sometimes it's weird to hear, "You're rich, you have all this now." I've always had more money than my friends because I've always worked.
PLAYBOY: How do you explain the early work ethic?
ROCK: My dad worked all the time, so I figured I should. It wasn't even the money. If you're a little boy, you want to be a man. And to me, a man worked. I shoveled snow when it was cold and shit when

it thawed. And you know what? It wasn't fun, but if I had to shovel shit again I wouldn't waste a day. Back then I never said, "How dare this happen to me!" I was a kid; I was supposed to be shoveling shit.

PLAYBOY: Do you own a dog today?

ROCK: My wife got one about a year ago. But I'm not cleaning shit no more.

PLAYBOY: How about having kids?

ROCK: I'm not ready.

PLAYBOY: Does the pressure your dad faced—and died of—to support a family scare you?

ROCK: I can afford a kid, but I don't want another job right now, let's put it that way. On the other hand, I'd be a real good dad, and I'd probably stop doing comedy on some level and become the guy doing it all for his kids. I used to look at my dad and think, What does he really want to do? Does he really want to come home all tired? He was beat. Beat the fuck down. We'd be out there playing stickball or whatever and he'd try to throw the ball at you. He'd throw it twice and his arm would fall off. He had to go in the house and rest. He was just tired a lot. I don't want to be that fucking tired.

PLAYBOY: Aren't you anyway?

ROCK: Not like him. I'm sure my father wanted a family to take care of and to get the love you can only get from a family. But, at the same time, he worked every fucking day. I haven't really done anything for all this shit I have. My dad worked. He supported people. He had kids. The kids wanted to go to school, the kids wanted bikes. The wife wanted something else. I work, but I'm not under the stress my dad was under. All my stress is based on worrying how I'll be perceived if I do bad work. It's not the same. I'll still eat. I really miss my dad. His death changed me, made me go into a shell I'm still not out of. Made me take more risks because it could be over in a second. It makes me sad that he didn't live to see what I've done. He would've eaten it up. We'd be going to the fights; we'd have season tickets to the Mets. My dad would be at the Dodgers' spring training right now in Vero Beach. If he were still around, I would have made it all happen.

PLAYBOY: How much does your mom enjoy your success?

ROCK: She's having a ball. She has a house in South Carolina, runs a day care center. She never shies away from doing stuff. I have to tell her not to: "What do you mean you're doing Ricki Lake?" [Pauses] My whole family is doing fine. They're all working. Brian works on the show; he's a production assistant and he's worked his way up. I'm not one who likes to pay people to do nothing, to just hang out with me. My brother Andre just bought a truck to haul garbage from New York to Pennsylvania. He has the steadiest gig as far as I'm concerned. I have the shakiest job in the family. But I can still appreciate what's happened to me and to my comfort level. The difference between me and my wife is that she complains about the maid and I can't believe I have a maid. I'm dumbfounded. I like that I can buy two slices of pizza. I've never been hungry in my whole life, but if you want more, you should be able to get more.

PLAYBOY: On the subject of getting some, we've noticed on your show that you seem to have a fondness for Latin women. Would you care to explain?

ROCK: Gorgeous women. Look at them. Have you ever been to the Puerto Rican Day parade? It's the most beautiful thing in the world. They are beautiful people. I love my people but boy—

PLAYBOY: Latina for you is exotic?

ROCK: It's exotic. American jails are filled with men over drug offenses and shit. Latin jails are filled up with men going crazy over their women. They are passionate about their women. If you fuck with them they'll lose their mind and kill you. Why? Their women have the best pussy in the world. Puerto Rican girls, man. Gorgeous. In bed it's "Mami," "Papi." What's better than some woman calling you Papi?

PLAYBOY: And you would know from experience?

ROCK: I've been called Papi a couple times, but long, long ago.

PLAYBOY: What do you love physically about black women?

ROCK: Probably the black ass. I hate women who hide the big ass. Don't hide the big ass. It's for all of us. Share this gift. Share your big ass with all of us. We don't have to touch it or anything, but don't hide the big ass. Let us see it. Let us worship it. Let us pay it compliments. Let us tip our hats to the big ass. Love the big ass. And I'm not alone. Brothers love ass. There was an episode of Real Sex on HBO. They went from a black strip club to a white strip club. It was so funny. The white strip club was all about tits. The black strip club, ass. It was all about ass.

PLAYBOY: When you look in the mirror now, what do you see?

ROCK: A skinny guy who needs to get his teeth fixed. I could also use an extra 15 pounds.

PLAYBOY: Let's wrap this up. Bill Cosby blazed the trail for Richard Pryor, who opened it up for Eddie Murphy, who set the stage for you. Will the success you've had make it tougher or easier for the next guy?

ROCK: I hope it will be easier, but maybe tougher artistically, like Richard Pryor made it tough. He did stuff 20 years ago that no one has matched, partly because he's brilliant and partly because he got to do it first.

PLAYBOY: What did you do first?

ROCK: I can't say without sounding like an idiot. [Pauses] I talked about race in a different way; I'll go that far.

PLAYBOY: Are you worried about the next new guy?

ROCK: I never look at anything as a competition. Someone else's success never comes out of my paycheck. I don't need my friends to fail for me to succeed. To me it's just, "Let's do good work." The function of the comedian is to get as many laughs as he can by doing whatever works for him. Everybody wants to buy his mother a house. Whatever you do to get that house is the right thing. We all do our own things, from Dice to Eddie Murphy putting on a leather suit. One of the happiest times in my life was when I was eight years old and my friends and I had cool bikes—and they were all the same bikes. I was happy because everyone was equal.

PLAYMATE OF THE YEAR 2026

Cristal

Model **@Cristalplayboy_official**

Photography by **Mike Cohen | @Mikecohenphotos**
MAU **Stephanie Emma | @Stephanieemmamakeup**

Hi Cristal, such an absolute honor to have you on Playboy. How does it feel to see yourself featured in this issue as a Playmate of the Year 2026? Thank you for the invitation and this amazing experience. It's a real honor to be on the cover of Playboy Australia again, especially as a Playmate of the Year 2026. Wow! This is incredible, I closed 2025 as a Playmate of the year 2025 and opened this year on the January cover as a Playmate of the year 2026. Nobody never didn't know what I've done in all history.

It's a real gift from God and a blessing. It's a breathtaking feeling that words can't describe. Thanks to you, I know that what I do and who I am have meaning. I'm an inspiration to many people and a social guest at many significant cultural events, festivals, fashion shows, and charity events. 2025 was a magical year for me. I appeared on the covers of many international magazines, on the cover of Playboy in a different country every month. It was a year of great successes and failures that made me where I am today and shaped me into who I am today. I wanted to thank you for believing in me because it's you, my readers and fans, who support and motivate me to be a better version of myself, to work hard, which, as you can see, is bringing spectacular results. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for being there and believing in me. I love you.

I never dreamt that one day I would be in Playboy; it's a blessing. It's like a fairy tale, how an ordinary girl from a small town in Poland, who had to overcome many hardships throughout her life, ends up on the cover of Playboy. My biggest dream has come true. The Playboy invitation has helped me believe in myself even more. It has given me a lot of hope and belief that everything is possible and the world is waiting for me. An unforgettable experience that I will remember for the rest of my life. Thank you so much.

The most beautiful things in my life always happen by accident. I remember the feeling of excitement when I received an invitation to the first Playboy. An unforgettable feeling, then came the next invitations from Playboy, and now I can reveal that there will be more in the future and other magazines, interviews, my guest appearances in artists' video clips. All this helped me believe in myself, in the fight against complexes, but above all, interacting and working with all these wonderful people photographers, models, hairstylists, makeup artists, musicians, fashion designers created me as an artist and I decided to start my own perfume brand which is created entirely by me and the scents are inspired by my memories from traveling to my magical places and my cosmetic brand to leave some kind of legacy and be able to fulfill my dreams about a foundation supporting young talents and people with autism.

Which three words describe you the best? I think is more than three lol: loyal, respectfull, honest, patient, optimistic, trustworthy, solid, goodhearted.

What's a childhood dream you've held on to? As a child, I dreamed of building wells and water infrastructure in Africa in the future to provide people living there with access to drinking water. It was my childhood dream to have an organization that helps people. I wanted to build schools and hospitals, to give something back, to help others live better in civilized conditions, to have enough food, medicine, and water.

If you could travel anywhere in the world this year, where would you go and why? I went on an unforgettable trip to Zanzibar for a photoshoot for this magazine. We visited interesting places and met amazing people. For the first time in my life, I saw untouched Africa and the wild animals of the Safari in Tanzania. It was my first time in this country, and I know I definitely want to go back. This place and the contact with the local culture transformed me, changed my perception of myself. I became a different person. I realized what is truly precious and valuable in life and what brings me happiness. I saw the beauty of simple things and realized what I truly need to be happy because we live in pursuit of material goods, surrounded by designer clothes and gadgets. And it's so true, it's no longer a perversion. I already miss this place. I can't wait to go back.

PLAYMATE OF
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What's a must-have item in your wardrobe right now? Honestly, my perfume. Wait, let me show you lol I love it. JustFetish by Joanne, the world has gone crazy for it; everyone wants it, especially after several publications in world-famous magazines.

If you could be any animal, what would you be and why? Maybe a beautiful butterfly, so I could fly aswellmaybe in my ex life (cos I belive for reincarnation) i was butterfly coś I'm multiented and my soul and generally life is so colorful like a butterfly. I even often have dreams in which I fly and these dreams are so real and how well I know the skills and memories from the past.

How do you define true success, and do you feel like you're living it? I think that the measure of success is the realization of your own dreams. I think that I have achieved some kind of success in my life, something that I can be proud of with my hard work, perseverance of character, but it is only thanks to you, my readers, and your support. I love you, and I am always mentally with you

What's the boldest decision you've ever made that changed your life? Without a doubt, it was leaving my homeland, which is Poland. It was the most difficult experience that shaped me into who I am today.

What's one thing you've always wanted to do but haven't dared to try yet? Definitely a parachute jump and a balloon flight.

A lot of young women look up to you. What advice would you give them on pursuing their own dreams? One of the most important lessons I have learned in my life is: be true to myself. This means not just in my personal life, but at work, too. Quite a few people have challenged me over the years, saying that you can't run a business based on personal values. But I completely disagree. You need to identify the opportunity, act on it, and not give up until you have a solution. Try not to change under pressure from others, be yourself, be authentic and natural. My basic value is respect and loyalty. I treat others the way I would like to be treated. In my career I've had lots of moments when I feel I've achieved something and also lots of other moments when something has gone wrong. I've learned that it helps to use neither to define who you can are or what you can achieve. There are days when you won't put in much effort, and everything good will fall in your lap. There are other days when you will try your hardest, and nothing will go right. That's just life.

But is important to always remember failure is a natural part of learning and an opportunity to grow. As i mentioned earlier. Even if stones land on your face every day, be strong and fight adversity, and think positively. I am the best example that the impossible is possible. In moments of failure, don't waste time analyzing your mistakes. They are your lesson for a better future. I want to go down in history as an icon of style and class. People with a great appetite for life, I think that I am already becoming an inspiration for people, so it is worth believing in dreams, because you just have to believe in yourself and start fulfilling them. I believe that the recipe for success is hard work and determination. I am an example that the concept of impossible does not exist, starting from the covers of Playboy to the covers of the most prestigious magazines. Additionally, I have developed my cosmetic brand focusing on perfume design, which was immediately picked up by the leading magazines on the market, making my perfume brand "JustFetish by Joanne" recognizable on the market. Currently, I have already appeared on several covers of magazines with bottles of my perfumes, and I already have more invitations to the next ones, as well as invitations to participate in perfume shows in the USA and Europe.

Is there a dream brand or platform you'd love to work with? For years, I have had a great fondness for the Louis Vuitton brand; it is an icon of style for me. Just as my grandmother was once for me. She infected me with love for this brand, it is the story of my grandmother's youth interwoven with war memories of her emigration and return to Poland with all her belongings locked in a Louis Vuitton trunk, which we found together in a dark corner of the basement as children. It has always been with me, later as a coffee table and a designer piece of equipment. I still have it today. The same story also applies to my perfumes, these are the scents of childhood, one of them I will recreate my grandmother's favorite scent. The essence of omnipotence is locked in a retro bottle. It was my grandmother who told me that if I work hard, one day I will buy myself a Louis Vuitton bag. for years I have been a loyal collector of accessories of this brand, an ambassador and guest invited to special Louis Vuitton shows, I pose for photos with accessories of this brand, and I even appeared on the cover of Playboy. I am currently focusing on my perfume brand „JustFetish by Joanne." In the future, I intend to continue designing home decoration accessories and interior design, which I have done before when decorating my hotels.

What's your future goals? I dream of a happy family and achieving my goals. I want to establish a Foundation for children with Touret's syndrome. Its a cause close to my heart for certain reasons. My greatest dream is to complete a biography about my life. It was not a bed of roses with many tears and sacrifices. It will include my memories and motivate people to never give up and have faith the sun always comes after the storm.

What is the most valuable lesson you've learned in your career as a model? One of the most important lessons I have learned in my life is: be true to myself. This means not just in my personal life, but at work, too. Quite a few people have challenged me over the years, saying that you can't run a business based on personal values. But I completely disagree. You need to identify the opportunity, act on it, and not give up until you have a solution.Try not to change under pressure from others, be yourself, be authentic and natural. my basic value is respect and loyalty. I treat others the way I would like to be treated.

What's the most valuable lesson you've learned in your career? In my career, I've had lots of moments when I feel I've achieved something and also lots of other moments when something has gone wrong. I've learned that it helps to use neither to define who you can be or what you can achieve. There are days when you won't put in much effort, and everything good will fall in your lap. There are other days when you will try your hardest, and nothing will go right. That's just life. But important is to always remember Failure is a natural part of learning and an opportunity to grow. As i mentioned earlier. Even if stones land on your face every day, be strong and fight adversity, and think positively. I am the best example that the impossible is possible. In moments of failure, don't waste time analyzing your mistakes. They are your lesson for a better future.

Who is your celebrity crush? I am a big fan of Lady Gaga because she is a multi-talented person as a singer, actress, and dancer, but she also has a very interesting character, and her vision of looking at the world motivates and inspires. From the world of FHM, Playboy, and this industry, is definitely Pamela Anderson but also Anna Nicole Smith - many people tell me that I am supposedly similar to her, haha. I recommend watching documentaries about their lives on Netflixx they are very inspiring.

What is the absolute worst thing a man can do to completely put you off? The worst thing you can do to offend me is to

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treat anyone, including me, without respect. If you only respect the wealthy its unsavoury and unacceptable to me. Men who decorate themselves in expensive methods they will be valuable, but in fact they are selfish, false, disloyal, and disrespectful to women. Wealth comes from within; it cannot be bought with any amount of money. To win my heart, be a caring, good-natured, loyal, individual. You will love me for who I am, my character, not what I have or don't have as a benefits for you. I only like well mannered gentleman who treats me like a lady, be old-fashioned with good manners. Thank you

What has been your favorite project or collaboration to date? For sure, Playboy it all started with him he opened the door to international fame, participation in many photo shoots, interviews for travel magazines meeting wonderful people. founding a cosmetics brand. Playboy gave me wings. It's an unforgettable experience that I will remember for the rest of my life. Thank you for this wonderful gift from God.

I never dreamt that one day I would be in Playboy; it's a blessing. It's like a fairy tale, how an ordinary girl from a small town in Poland, who had to overcome many hardships throughout her life, ends up on the cover of Playboy. My biggest dream has come true. The Playboy invitation has helped me believe in myself even more. It has given me a lot of hope and belief that everything is possible and the world is waiting for me. An unforgettable experience that I will remember for the rest of my life. Thank you.

What does a typical day in your life look like? When I wake up I squeeze fresh orange juice, I look through my mail, I go to the park with my dog. Then, when I come back, I make my favorite coconut latte macchiato, tabbouleh salad, definitely with pomegranate seeds and fresh mint. I put on my favorite music, and that's my time for meditation. Then some yoga exercises - a few deep breaths, and I'm ready for the whole day. My daily rutine have photo shoots for magazines, interviews, make-up, hairdresser, beautician. I go to the factory where we create perfume scents in the laboratory. I'm just finishing work on my own line of make-up, candles and air fresheners for the home. Every day of mine is intense, but I love it. When I have a lot of things to do, I feel alive.

How do you stay motivated and focused in a fast-paced industry? From my experience, if you are very busy you don't focus on details but on organizational issues and I think this is the key to success. You just have to remember about healthy eating, and the rest will take care of itself. Because when I am very busy and have a tight schedule, I can find more free time than when I have a looser schedule, it turns me into laziness and then I don't have time for anything.

What's your philosophy when it comes to balancing work and personal life? My philosophy on work-life balance is to prioritize intentionality and flexibility, meaning actively managing my time to dedicate quality moments to both my professional commitments and personal well-being, understanding that the balance may shift depending on life circumstances, while always striving to maintain a healthy separation between the two spheres to avoid burnout. What's one thing you do every day to keep yourself grounded and happy?

Staying grounded means for me being able to stay calm and connect with my core self in the face of uncertainty. Practicing physical wellness: Exercise daily, eat nutritious food, and prioritize quality sleep, spending time in naturę, connecting with your senses, listen to music that reminds you of something positive. All of these little things are rituals that make you fell better, even life sometimes can be hard and can be like balm for body and spirit. Repeating positive statements: Say kind statements to yourself, or repeat coping or safety statements.

What are some hobbies or passions you enjoy outside of work? I love helping others; this is the meaning of my life, especially for children with autism and Tourette's. Thanks to hard work, I managed to create my own cosmetic brand. I design my own perfume scents, and all this in order to establish a Foundation for children with Touret's syndrome. Its a cause close to my heart for certain reasons. My greatest dream is to complete a biography about my life. It was not a bed of roses with many tears and sacrifices. It will include my memories & motivate people to never give up and have faith that the sun always comes after the storm.

If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would it be and why? Modeling allows me to travel a lot, thanks to it, I have visited many interesting places, but there is still a lot to discover. I think that the place is not really of great importance, but the people you are around, they create places... You can be on a paradise beach alone with no one to talk to and enjoy the views together, and then you have the impression that it doesn't matter where but with whom. You can be at home in front of the TV watching Netflix and have someone to cuddle up to - then you are in paradise. As I said earlier, places are created by people, not the other way around.

Which piece of clothing makes you feel confident and empowered when wearing it? I think that an elegant

classic suit with my long red nails and red lipstick. I know what impression it makes on people lol. Generally, I wouldn't focus so much on the elements of clothing here, but my red nails, the color, length and shape of which are the same, unchanging over the years, are the key element of clothing that people often pay attention to. They are my characteristic distinguishing mark, hehe. I can even be in a tracksuit for a walk in the park, and everyone always compliments my manicure, very often even women. I feel well-groomed and dressed when I have a perfect manicure.

What's your favorite guilty-pleasure snack or meal? Mmm.. frozen yogurt with fruit and pistachio sauce is divine. I go for long Nordic walks so I can eat what I want lol.

How do you unwind and recharge after a busy day? I take an aromatic candlelight bath accompanied by my favorite classical music and Macha tea; it's a real ritual for body and soul.

What message do you hope to convey through your work? As mentioned above before, by not judging people by their cover, to support and help each other, not to be jealous and selfish. every day try to be the best version of yourself and treat others how you would like to be treated. Be your natural self, don't try to change under the pressure of others. Even if stones land on your face every day, be strong and fight adversity, and think positively. I am the best example that the impossible is possible. Stay strong and belive yourself and your dreams will come true. Thank you for spending this time getting to know me. Always sending you Love & best wishes.

Cristal xx

The Myth of Magnum Condoms

Size matters, but not in the way you think

You know what they say about guys who have big feet, right? They wear condoms that fit their cocks. No, people aren't saying that.

"If the shoe fits, wear it!" You're probably more familiar with that one. Can you imagine if you bought shoes two sizes too big in order to impress someone? That would be silly, not to mention a tripping hazard. So why buy condoms that don't fit your penis? I have a pretty good idea where the "bigger penis equals better sex" fallacy came from—porn—but I won't hold them solely responsible. The idea also stems directly from a lack of proper sex education. Penis diversity is never talked about—let alone different sizes of condoms.

But before we get into that, let's talk about penis size.

A meta-analysis published in the British Journal of Urology International found that, globally, the average erect penis length is a little more than five inches—a bit shorter than the iPhone 6s. There are outliers, of course, but if we surveyed 100 penis owners, only about 15 would have penises longer than six inches and only five would have penises shorter than four inches. The average penis girth found in the study was 4.6 inches. With the magic of pi, we know that means an average of about 1.5 inches in diameter.

Knowing your particular dimensions is key when selecting a condom. So how does one find the right fit?

Don't worry about asking to borrow your friend's phone that hasn't been upgraded since 2015 so you can measure your penis. The ideal measuring device is probably already in your house: a roll of toilet paper. This may have been a difficult task

BY **DR. MEGAN STUBBS** PHOTO BY **WHITE BEAR STUDIO**

If your condom looks like a sandwich bag on your penis, that isn't a good fit.

earlier this year (#Covid), but I'm confident you have one to spare. Make your penis hard and insert it into the cardboard tube. If it fits comfortably, you will likely do well with most standard-sized condoms. If it is a little roomy, you may want to explore slimmer-fitting brands. If it's tight or you can't fit your erect penis into the tube, you should consider Magnums and other brands of larger condoms.

Why does this matter?

When used properly, condoms are a great way to prevent pregnancy and STI transmission, so we want condoms to work the way they are supposed to. A properly sized condom fits the penis well, doesn't cause the user discomfort and doesn't break. If your condom looks like a sandwich bag on your penis, that isn't a good fit. Due to user error, many condoms' effectiveness rates are lower during real-life sex than when tested for breakage, and having poor-fitting condoms definitely contributes to those lowered rates.

Knowing the condom size that's right for you is great, but you also have to consider the variations of your penis. This is your permission slip to really inspect the specifics of your penis. Is the head particularly large? Is the shaft slim all the way up and down? Does it have a wider base? These factors can all impact how a condom is going to both fit and feel. Don't think, "I tried them once and they didn't work for me," or the classic, "I'm too big for a condom." If you watched my recent Playboy Advisor Live, you saw me put a condom over my entire forearm. If you're larger than that, we should chat.

Based on the numbers in the British Journal of Urology International study, it stands to reason that penis owners may need to explore more size options.

Let's review how to put a condom on a penis properly. First, make sure the condom isn't expired and the packaging hasn't been compromised. Open it with your hands—not your teeth!—and check the tip orientation of the rolled-up condom. It should be applied to an erect penis like a little hat, so you can roll it down with ease.

An additional option: Stretch out the condom ring before you put it on. Maybe a certain size almost fits you, but the bottom digs into your base. Give the ring a few stretches before you roll it on, which may help alleviate the pinching tightness at the base.

You can also add a drop of lube in the tip for added sensation. It really makes a difference! Now pinch the tip of the condom and roll it down the penis shaft until you reach the base. (Bonus points if you can do it with your mouth.) Now you can have fun!

It's absolutely okay to change up the brand and style of condoms you use. There are literally hundreds on the market. Whether you need a snugger fit, a wider one because you're particularly girthy or a larger reservoir tip for your head, I'm confident your Goldilocks perfect-fitting condom is out there. Leave your ego in aisle six and pick up the right fit for you. It's also okay if you are just now learning about condoms. Thank you for taking the time to invest in safer sex, and high-five to you for using a condom!

GIVE ME MORE

WRITTEN BY
ANITA LITTLE

PHOTOS BY
CHARLOTTE RUTHERFORD

The democratization of consent. The freedom to communicate what you want to do or what you want done to you. The art of lying back, letting go and edging closer to getting off. Do you feel that? Do you want more? Feel it tingle, taunt, touch and take you into another universe.

Pulling back the curtain on the beauties of BDSM

This euphoria is deeply interwoven in the acts of BDSM (bondage, discipline, sadism and masochism), the craft of making sex as compassionate and consensual as it is captivating. If we want to become a truly sex-positive society, we need to engage with one of the few sexual subcultures that take sex positivity seriously.

"We—especially men—have been socially conditioned to avoid pain and submission," explains Domina Colette Pervette, a San Francisco–based dominatrix. "But the lines between pain and pleasure begin to blur in the state of heightened arousal."

The conflation of BDSM with perversion remains the biggest misconception the practice faces. Strange, given that one must be an excellent communication to partake in kink; if you can't talk about it, you aren't ready to be blindfolded, whipped, chained or cuffed. "There are no assumptions in BDSM. Everything has to be negotiated," says Pervette.

"The first hour is all about communication," says Argent Lloyd of his practice of shibari, the art of Japanese rope bondage. "I want to share this space with you, and you're giving me permission to put my hands on you."

Despite the BDSM community's history of promoting respect between partners, practitioners have often been thrown into the same bucket as predators. Until 2013, the practice of BDSM was classified as a disorder in the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders—alongside pedophilia and bestiality.

Susan Wright, founder of the National Coalition for Sexual Freedom, works to change how the mental health community understands kink. "So much of what we focus on is educating professionals. They are the gatekeepers," she says. According to Wright, in 2008, 124 parents approached the organization because their BDSM preferences were being used against them in family court. After the NCSF successfully campaigned for clinicians to update the DSM, that number had dropped to 20 parents by 2018.

What's more backward about kink-shaming is how much the vanilla could learn from the kinky. Lucky for us, appreciators of kink are coming out of the closet. This includes celebrity ambassadors: Adam Rippon wore a leather harness to the 2018 Academy Awards; Michael B. Jordan and Timothée Chalamet followed. This isn't an E.L. James fantasy; this is reality. And our world needs it. "People often forget that BDSM is just another way of connecting with someone," says Pervette. "How we as a culture accept BDSM is indicative of how open we are to the expression of sexual freedom overall."

March 2019 Playmate Miki Hamano

September 2018 Playmate Kirby Griffin

February 2016 Playmate Kristy Garett

2013 Playmate of the Year and April 2012 Playmate Raquel Pomplun

Iconic & Unstopable

Claudia Fijal Lynnie Marie

Model **@claudiafijal**

Model **@misslynniemarie**

Photographer **rlbphoto88**

Claudia Fijal and Lynnie Marie don't just enter a room; they shift the temperature. Individually, they've each carved out bold, unapologetic lanes in an industry that thrives on confidence, authenticity, and presence. Together, they're something else entirely: a collision of chemistry, wit, and modern femininity that feels both effortless and intentional. Their combined **Playboy Sweden** January cover isn't just a striking visual moment; it's a statement. A snapshot of two women fully owning who they are, where they're going, and the power of choosing to do it side by side.

This cover marks more than a shared shoot; it captures a partnership rooted in mutual respect, sharp humor, and a refusal to play by outdated rules. Claudia brings a magnetic poise that balances elegance with edge, while Lynnie's fearless energy and quick-fire charm keep things refreshingly unpredictable. The result is a dynamic that feels less like a collaboration and more like a natural extension of who they are when they're together, confident, candid, and completely in control.

But the story doesn't stop at the pages of a magazine. Off camera, Lynnie introduces Claudia as her new Co-host and counterpart to **Coffee and Cleavage**, a podcast that blends unfiltered conversation with real insight, humor, and just the right amount of provocation. What started as casual, caffeine-fueled conversations between friends has evolved into a platform where nothing is too taboo, vulnerability is embraced, and confidence comes without apology. It's playful, it's sharp, and beneath the bold title lies something deeper, a space where women speak freely, challenge expectations, and laugh loudly while doing it.

In an era where audiences crave authenticity over polish, **Coffee and Cleavage** taps directly into that demand. Claudia and Lynnie aren't performing characters; they're showing up as themselves, sometimes glamorous, sometimes chaotic, always honest. Whether they're unpacking modern dating, industry double standards, ambition, or the realities behind the curated images people see online, the conversations feel intimate, relatable, and refreshingly real.

This Playboy Sweden cover and the rise of their podcast represent the same core idea: two women embracing their individuality while amplifying each other's voices. It's about ownership, partnership, and creating something that feels undeniably theirs. As they step into the new year with momentum behind them and eyes firmly on what's next, one thing is clear: Claudia Fijal and Lynnie Marie aren't just having a moment. They're building one.

Claudia Fijal & Lynnie Marie: *The Cover Moment*

What did it mean to both of you to be chosen for a Playboy Sweden cover and to do it together rather than solo? *Claudia:* We are so incredibly excited! We have been good friends for many years and have talked about one day landing a cover together, so this is truly so special.
Lynnie: We are both very excited about it, especially since it's our first duo cover and the timing couldn't be more perfect as we relaunch Coffee and Cleavage podcast into the new year!

How would you describe the dynamic between you two, both on set and off camera? *Claudia:* We are the same two firecrackers on camera and off. Off camera, we feed off of our energy with jokes and laughs, but on camera, I think we mirror each other perfectly as well.
Lynnie: We definitely have an amazing energy together, both on and off camera.

What was the energy like during the shoot was it more playful, empowering, or pure chaos? *Claudia:* I think we work so well together that it's always empowering and fun, but we also know how to land the shots we need together.
Lynnie: Definitely a playful vibe, we always have a blast when we shoot together.

Claudia, what do you think Lynnie brings out in you that fans might not usually see? Lynnie always brings out my silly side because we just mesh so well together. I think my fans see that sometimes but she definitely knows how to make shoots fun.

Lynnie, same question, what side of Claudia shows up when you're together that surprises people? Claudia is my spirit animal...I love her *"unbothered"* vibe. It's very empowering.

What was the most memorable moment from the shoot that didn't make it into the final images? *Claudia:* Well, we definitely shot some incredible behind the scenes content you might want to check out our spicy pages for.
Lynnie: Us trying not to laugh and be serious and sexy.

How do you each personally define confidence, and how has that definition evolved over time? *Claudia:* I think confidence is an evolution. I feel like the older I get, the more confident I become in myself and my craft.
Lynnie: Being completely comfortable in your own skin and knowing your worth. It's evolved with age for sure.

Do you feel this cover represents a new chapter for you both or a statement of where you are right now? *Claudia:* I can't speak for Lynnie but this is a whole new chapter for me and I'm so grateful Lynnie has the trust in me to continue on this incredible podcast with her.
Lynnie: New exciting chapter for both of us.

Coffee, Cleavage & Chemistry: The Podcast Era At what point did you realize your chemistry deserved its own platform and not just social media? *Claudia:* I think being friends who trust each other and are 100000% real with each other at all times created a beautiful foundation for this podcast, or truly anything we embark on together!
Lynnie: Claudia showed interest in becoming my new co-host, and I immediately knew she would be the perfect fit. Our personalities just mesh so well together.

For anyone who hasn't tuned in yet, how would you describe Coffee and Cleavage in three words? *Claudia:* Unfiltered, real, thought-provoking.
Lynnie: Edgy, funny, and real.

The title is bold and unapologetic. What message were you sending with that name alone? *Claudia:* What you see is what you get.
Lynnie: It just fits perfectly....two confident women comfortable discussing taboo topics.

What topics are completely off-limits on the podcast... if any? *Claudia:* None! Bring it on.
Lynnie: Nothing is off limits.

How do your personalities balance each other when co-hosting? Who's the instigator and who's the voice of reason? *Claudia:* I think I'm definitely a little bit of an instigator. I love rattling cages!
Lynnie: We are both similar but also different in many ways which creates an amazing balance. Pisces and Aries energy 100%, and for us, it just works perfectly.

What kind of conversations are you most excited to bring to listeners that you can't have anywhere else? *Claudia:* I think most importantly, we want our listeners to feel like they can connect with us. Nothing is off limits.
Lynnie: Anything juicy or taboo.

Has hosting a podcast changed how you see yourselves as creators, entrepreneurs, or public figures? *Claudia:* For me, it's definitely opened my mind up to topics I don't think I've ever dived into. Which in turn, makes me think bigger and grander all together.
Lynnie: Absolutely...it's always nice to hear how an episode really helped someone.

What kind of guests can fans expect industry insiders, friends, or people who might shock the audience? *Claudia:* We want to take the pod to the next level. We welcome guests who are open-minded and fun.
Lynnie: All the above.

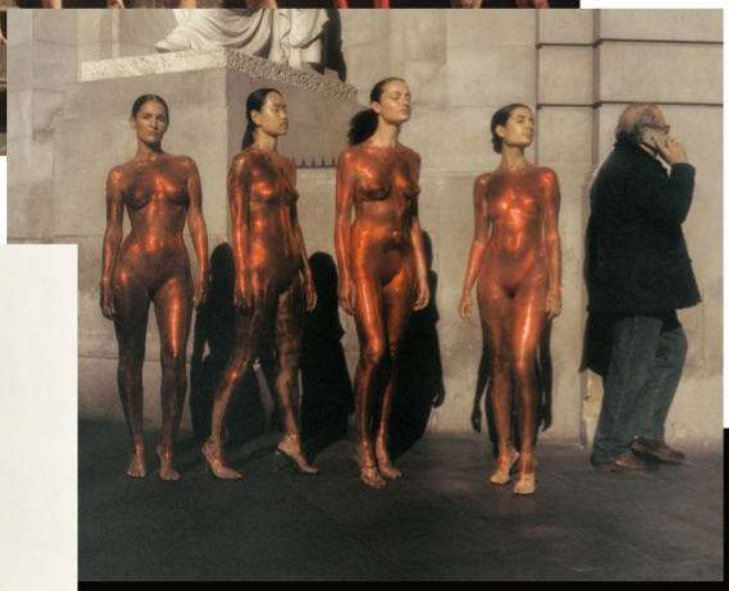
How do you want listeners to feel after an episode of Coffee and Cleavage ends? *Claudia:* I want them to feel like they have a safe space where things they always thought of finally have a place to be discussed.
Lynnie: Enlightened, inspired, and sometimes still laughing.

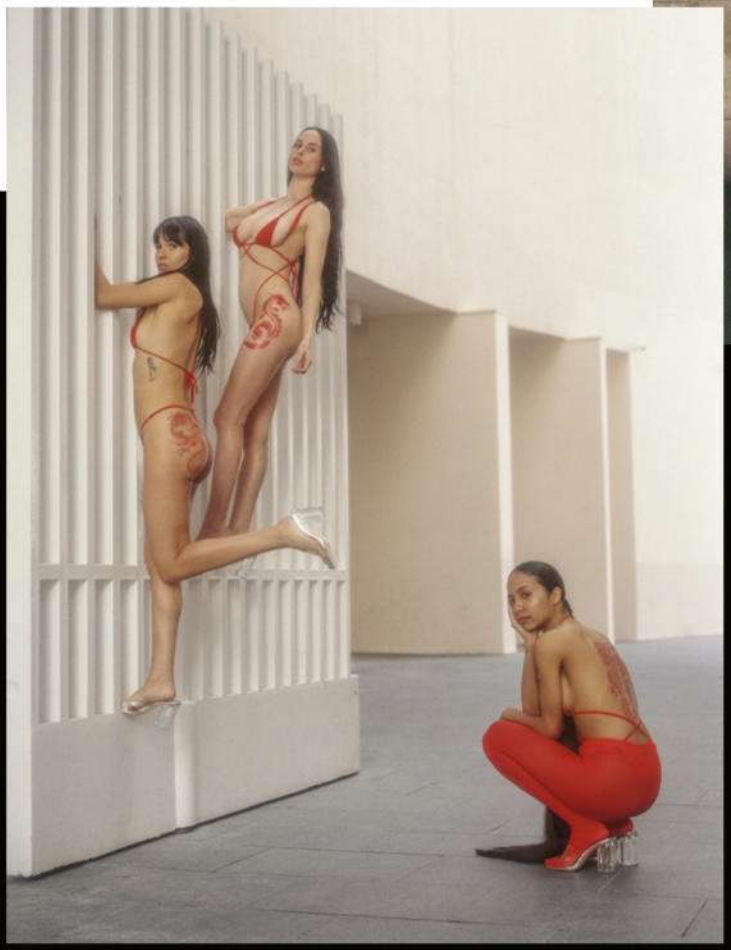
Looking ahead to 2026, where do you see the podcast and your partnership going next? *Claudia:* We are so excited to embark on this NEW season of Coffee & Cleavage. I welcome new thoughts, new laughs, and new beginnings. And I'm so grateful to Lynnie for the opportunity.
Lynnie: This is just the beginning of a new chapter for Coffee & Cleavage, and we plan on taking it to the next level.

CUL-TURE SHOCK

A defiant and powerful public celebration of nudity, sexuality and the female body

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **CARLOTA GUERRERO**





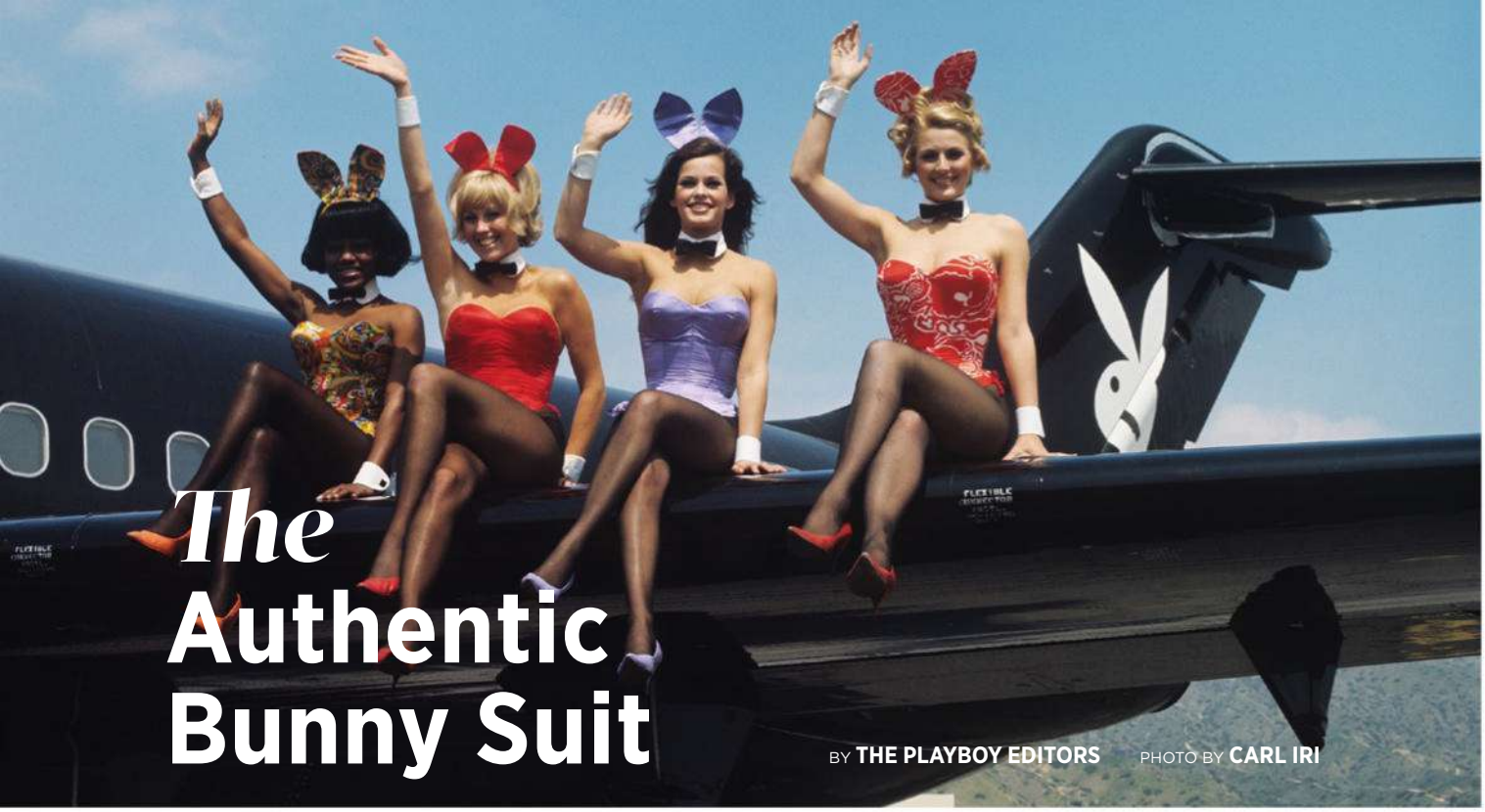
When PLAYBOY approached Carlota Guerrero about an original pictorial, the Spanish art director, who had gained international notoriety after shooting the indelible cover of Solange Knowles's 2016 album, A Seat at the Table, knew almost immediately what she wanted to accomplish: m"I want to create an aesthetic inspired by the women who are empowered by their sexuality; I want to express that we are all goddesses and sexual beings at the same time."

Featuring more than a dozen women in various states of undress marching through Barcelona (and challenging the law; the city banned toplessness in 2011), the following work shows how sexuality—and sexual freedom—can be both performance art and public spectacle.

"I want to express that we are all goddesses and sexual beings at the same time."

Featuring models Alex de la Croix, Dolores de la Rosal, Lovisa Lager, Virgin Maria, La Zowi, extras Bernarda Antonia, Ana Nicole Montes de Oca Colliander, Aminata Diao, Intissar El Meskine, Cristina Ramírez Garrido, Clàudia Grosche, Olivia Huerta, Celina Bähr Martins, Nina Pham, Maya Ponzini, Eleni Reynera, Elisa Sanfeliu Ricart, Gabriela Richardson, Patricia Franquesa Ruiz, Dana Silva, Carolina Costa Trinches.

Styling by Stephania Yepes, makeup by Gloria Rico, produced by O Creative Studio.



The Authentic Bunny Suit

BY **THE PLAYBOY EDITORS** PHOTO BY **CARL IRI**

The bespoke Playboy Bunny suit is an icon of Americana and a one-of-a-kind uniform—often imitated, never surpassed

When the Playboy Bunny suit made its club debut on February 29, 1960 in Chicago, it was missing a few notable elements that have come to be an expected part of the outfit—namely, the tuxedo collar and cuffs and the name-tage rosette. Besides those key addtions—and the notable subtraction of fabric via a higher-cut leg line—the world-famous costume has remained remarkably stable across the decades. Tribute, we think, to how great it was to begin with.

Here are the essential elements of the sexiest work uniform in the world:

SATIN EARS
Worn crooked or straight, the Bunny ears offer the wearer a form of subtle self-expression.

BLACK BOWTIE
The Playboy Bunny's delicate balance of playfulness and sophistication starts here.

BESPOKE SUIT
Custom-made and hand-tailored to each and every Playboy Bunny, the suit creates a silhouette recognizable from a mile off.

PLAYBOY CUFFLINKS
Bunnies ensure that the little silver Rabbit Heads on their cufflinks face each other, or "kiss."

ROSETTE NAME TAG
The individualized nameplate is worn on the hip, which is eye-level for seated customers—learning names has never been such a pleasure.

FLUFFY TAIL
The final touch to complete the costume, the tail sits centered at the small of the Bunny's back.

CRISP WHITE CUFFS
Added, along with the bowtie and collar, in 1961, the cuffs caused the world to ask, "Who needs sleeves?"

NUDE + BLACK TIGHTS
The early Bunnies doubled up, layering black pantyhose over nude tights.

STILETTO PUMPS
Bunny pumps historically match the color of the suit but today are commonly worn in black.

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